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6 May 1827

It has been my privilege to  
read his Book, & to be  
introduced to the Hall & Library  
of the British Museum,  
where I shall find  
much more, I doubt himself  
no matter, I cannot here speak  
of, but for the Hall & Library,  
in the name of Jesus of his —

I read it now in my own  
Library — & may I learn in  
one hour with a happy

dedicated  
know —

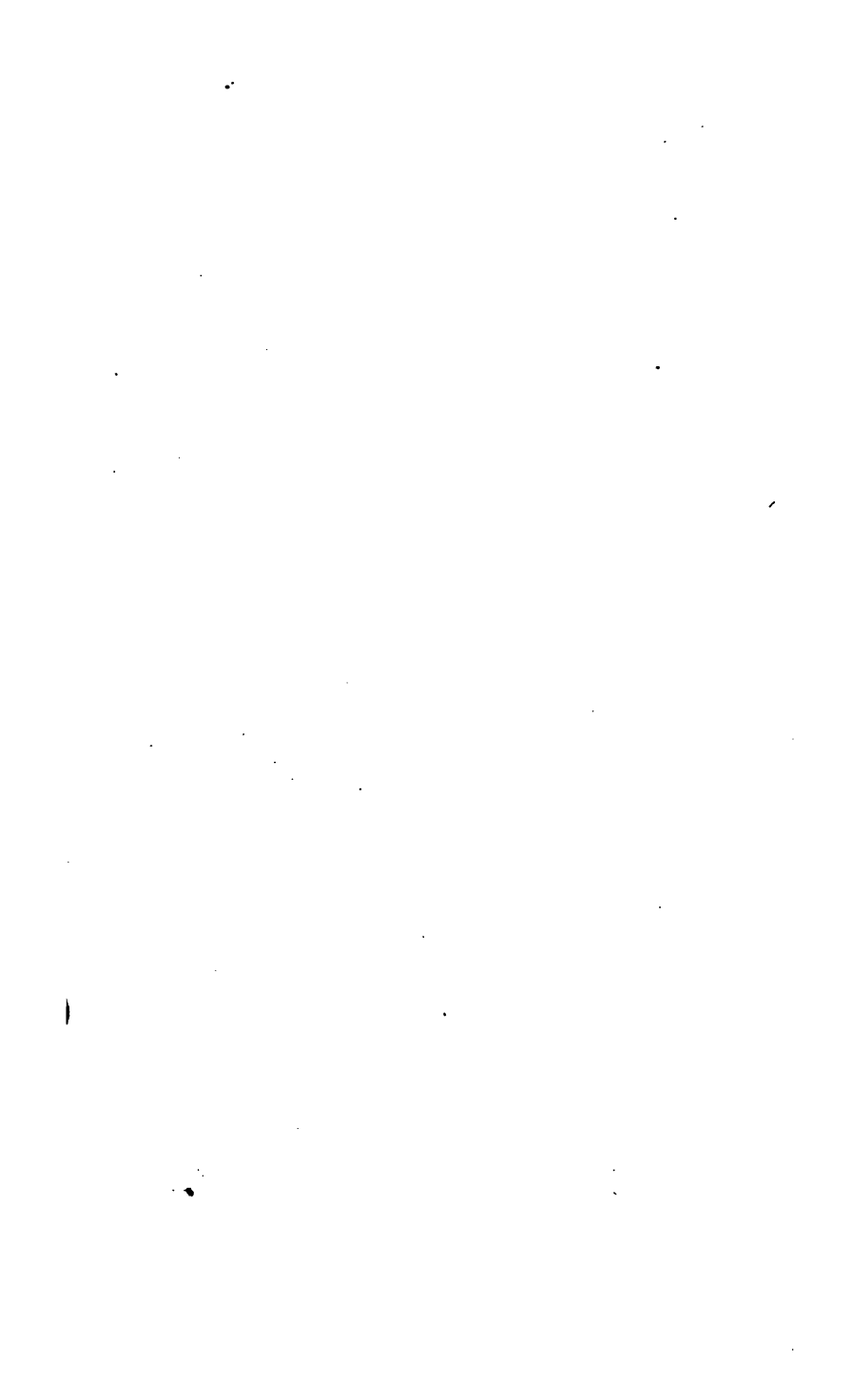
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1833





*James R. Drummond.*  
**ACCOUNT**  
**1839** 20502.  
**OF THE**  
**EDINBURGH SESSIONAL SCHOOL,**

**AND THE OTHER**

**PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR EDUCATION**

**ESTABLISHED IN THAT CITY IN THE YEAR 1812.**

**WITH**

**STRICTURES**

**ON**

**EDUCATION IN GENERAL.**

**BY**

**JOHN WOOD, Esq.**

————— Ignorance is the curse of God ;  
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.

*Shakspeare.*

**FOURTH EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.**

**EDINBURGH:**

**PRINTED FOR JOHN WARDLAW, EDINBURGH:**

**W. COLLINS, GLASGOW ; A. BROWN AND CO. ABERDEEN ; BANCKS  
AND CO. MANCHESTER ; JAMES DUNCAN, AND WHITTAKER,  
TREACHER, AND ARNOT, LONDON ; AND W. CURRY, JUN. AND CO.  
DUBLIN.**

**MDCCCXXXIII.**

Edinburgh; Printed by A. Balfour and Co. Niddry Street.

45

TO THE  
REVEREND CLERGY,  
AND THE  
KIRK-SESSIONS OF EDINBURGH.

---

GENTLEMEN,

To whom could I so appropriately dedicate the following Account of the Parochial Institutions of our City, as to you—their benevolent Founders and most zealous Patrons? Nor, I trust, will the offering be the less acceptable, that it is presented by one, who, while he in this very work professes his steadfast attachment to another communion, has never, at the same time, been blind to the distinguished piety, exemplary worth, and extensive usefulness of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland; nor ceased

to admire in particular that zeal in the cause of education, which, in every period, has been one of the most striking features of that establishment.

If this little work should be attended with no other advantage, (and I am deeply conscious that its execution will disappoint the hopes of those who called it forth,) it at least affords me an opportunity of vindicating your just claims, and of directing the Public to the real quarter, to which they are indebted for those benefits, that have been so widely diffused through the medium of your excellent Institutions. In doing so, I would, at the same time, embrace the opportunity of returning you my warmest thanks for that liberality, which permitted me to become a partner in your labours, the results of which will, I trust, to the last hour of my life, continue to be a source of my highest gratification. May I venture to hope, that, on your part, the confidence, which you reposed in me, will not be considered to have been misplaced; and that, in the superintendence of the education of your interesting charge in those essential principles of our common faith, which ought to be the fundamental basis of all education, no inconvenience has been felt from the circumstance, that there were other points be-

hind, in which we happened conscientiously (though perhaps widely) to differ.

In a work which, though it lies within a narrow compass, embraces a wide range of controverted opinions, I cannot flatter myself, that either you, or perhaps any one of my readers, will concur with me in every point. It is therefore proper to state, that for these opinions, I am myself exclusively responsible; and that, the more effectually to protect others from a responsibility which might have proved embarrassing, I have even foregone the no small advantage, which my Treatise might have derived, from having been submitted to the consideration and able correction of the Office-bearers of the Institution. This circumstance it is more necessary to notice, on account of the general terms, which have sometimes been employed in the expression of these opinions. It was my original intention not to have prefixed my name to the "Account," and to have sent it forth to the world as from the Conductors of the Institution. In the progress of the work, however, I found it necessary to treat of so many questions, liable to diversity of opinion, that, in justice to others, I considered myself bound to abandon that intention, and to come forward in my own name; though, partly for the sake of uniform-

ity, and partly to avoid unnecessary egotism, I continued to employ the plural number.

With my best wishes, that, under your parental and fostering care, THE EDINBURGH PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS may long continue to be a blessing to the Public, I remain,

GENTLEMEN,

Your faithful and obliged Servant,

JOHN WOOD.

GREAT KING STREET,  
6th Nov. 1828.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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"Care I for the big assemblance?—give me *the spirit*, Master Shallow."

---

SHAKESPEARE.

AN account of the method of instruction pursued in THE EDINBURGH PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS has been so long and so urgently called for, by the friends of education in various quarters, that it appears more necessary to explain, why this wish has hitherto remained ungratified, than to offer any apology for a publication, which, whatever may be its demerits, will hardly have to defend itself against the charge of being thrust obtrusively upon the notice of the public.

The truth is, that the conductors of this establishment never had the slightest desire to hold themselves out as the inventors of a new system, but have, on the contrary, uniformly attributed any success,

which may have attended their humble labours, not so much to any novelty or peculiarity of external arrangement, as to their having made it their anxious endeavour, to keep steadily in view, and to bring into active operation, those simple and obvious principles, which they conceive Nature herself must have dictated to every parent and teacher, previously to more artificial contrivances. To open up a royal road to learning, by which all the advantages of superior education might be attained, without any trouble on the part either of the teacher or scholar, undoubtedly never for a single moment entered into their contemplation. But they were by no means on that account less anxious, to do every thing in their power, to render the duties of both as easy, as pleasing, and profitable as possible ; and particularly to study the capacity and the inclinations of the learner. In all their arrangements they have regarded their youngest pupil, not as a machine, or an irrational animal, that must be driven, but as an intellectual being who may be led ; endowed, not merely with sensation and memory, but with perception, judgment, conscience, affections, and passions ; capable, to a certain degree, of receiving favourable or unfavourable impressions, of imbibing right or wrong sentiments, of acquiring good or bad habits ; strongly averse to application, where its object is unperceived or remote, but, on the other hand, ardently curious, and infinitely delighting in the display of every new attainment which he makes. It has, accordingly, been their anxious aim to interest no less than to task,—to make the pupil understand (as

much as possible) what he is doing, no less than to exact from him its performance,—familiarily to illustrate, and copiously to exemplify the principle, no less than to hear him repeat the words of a rule,—to speak to him, and by all means to encourage him to speak, in a natural language, which he understands, rather than in irksome technicalities, which the pedant might approve,—to keep him while in school not only constantly, but actively, energetically employed,—to inspire him with a zeal for excelling in whatever is his present occupation, (whether it be study or amusement), and, even where he is incapable of excelling others, still, by noticing with approbation every step, however little, which he makes towards improvement, to delight him with the consciousness of excelling his former self.

These obvious principles may be grafted on a variety of systems of external arrangement, adapted to the particular circumstances and object of each individual seminary ; but, for any defect of the principles themselves, or of a due sense of their paramount importance, we conceive that no system of external arrangement, however beautiful—no selection of books, however judicious—no talents or accomplishments on the part of the instructor, however brilliant and transcendent, can ever in any degree compensate. In carrying these principles into practice in their own establishment, the Directors of the Edinburgh Sessional School readily availed themselves of every aid, which they could procure, whether from the old school or from more modern systems. Unconnected with education as a profession,

they were on that account more free from the trammels, and perhaps also from the prejudices, of professional men. Enlisting themselves under no favourite leader, and undesirous either of popularity or of becoming the leaders of a new party, they had no other object in view, than the humble and unambitious one, of communicating useful knowledge, in the simplest and easiest, and, at the same time, most attractive form, to the indigent and helpless objects of their care. Little did it enter into their conception, that the lowly seminary, which they originally opened, and for many years conducted, in an unceiled apartment, in one of the most obscure and least inviting corners of their city, was ever to arrest the eye of any passenger, or to be looked upon as an object, either of jealousy, or of imitation. The arrangements, accordingly, were all strictly adapted to the immediate circumstances and object of their own establishment ; and, though the system there pursued (if *system* it is to be called) has indeed been crowned with success, beyond their own most sanguine expectation, they were not on that account disposed to regard it as meriting any greater share of public attention, than had already so unexpectedly been bestowed upon it.

Their scheme, too, with all the advantages, which have been ascribed to it, by the partiality of its admirers, they have ever themselves considered as still merely in a state of infancy, and very far, indeed, remote from that perfection, which is boldly attributed to the Madras system by its celebrated founder. If there be any plan of education, of



which it can with justice be said, that, in point of *principle*, "the wit of man can add nothing to it, and can take nothing from it,"\* and that its *details* are neither susceptible, nor stand in need of great improvement, undoubtedly it is not the subject of the present treatise, which can make any such lofty pretensions. Many are the defects, on the contrary, which its conductors are incessantly labouring to supply; many the improvements, which it is still their anxious aim to introduce. No one will allege, that hitherto at least their school has been stationary or unimproving: nor can they, on the other hand, charge themselves with any unsteadiness or vacillation in its management. The changes, which they have introduced, all flowed from the same fixed principles; they followed each other in regular succession; and hence, instead of retarding the education of the *existing* pupils, (as is too often the case with violent changes arising from a wavering spirit) on the contrary contributed to assist their progress. No discerning stranger has ever repeated his visit to their school after even a short interval, without remarking the advance which had been made, both in the proficiency of individual pupils, and in the general system of the establishment. One of its own former teachers, who had left it only about a year and a half before, on a recent visit to his former charge, was astonished to find the fourth class reading a book, which had, at the time when he was in attendance, been exclusive-

\* See Bell's Manual.

ly confined to the first or highest, and answering questions upon it in a manner, which, as he said, we should then have considered as doing credit to the most advanced and ablest boys; while the latter were now receiving and fully comprehending much higher instruction, than had at that time, so far as he knew, been even in contemplation. While such changes were going on, the public can hardly blame us, for not having sooner gratified them, with an account of this unstationary, though by no means unsteady system. Had any account been given of it at the time, when it was first most loudly called for, it must have been entirely defective in the delineation of some of the most interesting features, which the school at this day presents: and it is to be hoped, that the present attempt will, ere long, be liable to a similar objection.\*

Even, however, if there were no room for *this* objection, and if the method of instruction had attained all the perfection, of which it is susceptible, we were well aware of the almost insurmountable difficulty, which would still remain, of conveying to

\* Even during the short period that has intervened since the original publication of this work, very considerable improvements have taken place. These however it is the less necessary to particularize, as they have all proved corroborative of the general principles there laid down. They have arisen from the greater maturity of the system, and the high perfection to which the monitors have attained: in consequence of which their classes are at this moment in a far more forward state of advancement, and perhaps all of them much more thoroughly grounded, than the corresponding ones at that period.

the minds of those, who had not witnessed it in actual operation, any adequate conception, either of its results, or of the steps by which these had been attained. To such as have not been accustomed to behold the youthful mind in any thing like full activity, the accounts have ever been unintelligible, and we know, have sometimes appeared marvellous and incredible, of acquirements, which in others, to whom they had been matters of daily and familiar observation, have long ago ceased to excite the slightest feeling of surprise. Nor is it to be expected that these difficulties, either of understanding or belief, should easily yield to any detail of preliminary steps, of which, perhaps, the principal recommendation is their extreme simplicity.

In opposition to all this, it has been contended, that to withhold the information, which has been asked, would at once be illiberal and injurious. Whether the method of instruction in question is to be deemed a system, or a combination of systems, the offspring of prudent forethought, or the result of observation and experience, it has already been successful in one quarter, and there is no reason (it is said) why it should not be equally beneficial elsewhere. If a mere statement cannot give one at a distance an adequate conception, either of the plan, or of its mode of operation, still it is thought, that it may not even to him be altogether without advantage; while to those, who have had the opportunity of personal inspection, it may be the means of recalling some not unuseful recollections, and also, perhaps, of suggesting some circumstances,

which, though not immaterially contributing to the success of the Institution, may have happened at the time to escape their observation. To delay the publication till the seminary should come to a stand in point of improvement, (it has, not without reason, been maintained) would be to wait for a period, which ought not to arrive at all, and of which, at present at least, there is happily no near prospect. Last of all, it has been urged, (nor has this consideration been without its influence in drawing forth the present statement) that if those, who have the best means of acquaintance with the subject, should continue silent, there is a danger, that it may be taken up in some quarter, where its real bearings may be less distinctly understood.

The writer of the present Account, in compliance with these views of his friends, rather than with his own inclination, which would have withheld him from the performance of a task, that, if less involuntary, might well have been deemed to savour of presumption, has at length been induced to lay before the Public a minute detail of the history and arrangements of an institution, in which he can never fail to take the most lively interest. In doing so, however, he would wish most anxiously to guard his readers against the erroneous notion, that the success of any seminary can ever depend entirely, or even principally, upon its *machinery*, (so to speak,) or external system of arrangement. That no school can ever be well conducted without due attention to order and method, every one in the slightest degree acquainted with the subject will

readily admit; and the gratitude, both of the present and of future ages, is therefore most justly due, for the facilities, which the systems of Bell and Lancaster have, in this department, contributed to the cause of general education. Every judicious conductor of an establishment for education, accordingly, will be at the utmost pains to render his system in this respect as perfect as he can. But, when this is done, he will keep in remembrance, that the weightier matters remain behind. He will consider, that it is not upon the nature of the scaffolding or building apparatus, however skilfully devised and admirably adapted to its own purpose, that the beauty, or usefulness, or stability of the future fabric is to depend; nor will he suffer himself to forget, how often it has happened, that, on the removal of the scaffolding, some deformity or flaw in the structure itself has been disclosed, which the apparatus had hitherto concealed from the eye of the spectator. From inattention to this fundamentally important truth, how large a proportion, unfortunately, of the schools instituted even upon the most justly celebrated systems have been allowed to become little better than mere pieces of mechanism, pretty enough indeed in external appearance, but comparatively of little use, in which the puppets strut with wondrous regularity and order, and with all that outward "pomp and circumstance," which are well calculated to catch a superficial observer, but in which all the while the mind is but little exerted, and of course little, if at all, improved.

Nor let it be imagined, that the scheme adopted

in the Sessional School may not be liable, as well as other systems, to have its injudicious admirers and imitators. Struck with the alleged success of the system as there exhibited, one may investigate every its minutest detail with no less punctilious care, than that of the poor savage, who, restored on one occasion to health by the administration of a particular drug, ever afterwards fondly treasures up in his memory, with a view to the recurrence of a similar exigency, the recollection of the day of the moon, the hour of the day, the posture of his own body at the time of his receiving the medicine, and every other little adventitious concomitant of his cure. The copyist may introduce precisely the same number and the same size of classes,—may place the master, the monitors, and the scholars, in the same respective positions,—may prescribe to them the same movements,—may put the same books into their hands,—and, in short, may give the whole the self-same external aspect. But, if he be not at least equally desirous to catch the *spirit*, as to imitate the *forms*—to keep steadily in view the ends, which it is the legitimate object of education to attain, as well as the steps, which, under proper guidance, may facilitate their attainment,—if he imagine, that any artificial contrivance whatever can, in the slightest degree, supersede the necessity of diligence and zeal, of earnestness and kindness of manner, on the part of the instructor,—if he treat his pupils more as mechanical than as intellectual beings, attempting rather to cram into them a certain definite quantity of instruction, than to inspire them with the taste, and furnish them with the

power of acquiring knowledge for themselves,—if he content himself with teaching them to repeat by rote with slavish precision rules, of which they are left alike ignorant of the principle and of the application, or to pronounce with formal tone, and measured cadence and inflection, a mere jargon of sounds, to which they have never learned to attach the slightest signification,—let him not wonder, if, notwithstanding all the pains, which he has bestowed on the externals of his system, it should degenerate into as dull, cold, and lifeless a *routine*, as is exhibited in any of the most unproductive seminaries around him.

It is no less necessary, on the other hand, to guard against the opposite error of imagining, that, because the externals may subsist where the spirit is wanting, the former, in place of being rendered subservient to the latter, should be laid aside altogether as utterly unavailing. It may be very true, that neither the monitors and other arrangements of Bell and Lancaster for facilitating mutual instruction, and maintaining order and constant activity, nor the places, and prizes, and other incitements to emulation, which have so long held their place in almost every approved system of education, can of themselves insure success to any seminary. But it is much to be doubted, whether the Sessional School would ever have attained its present character, if its Directors had either neglected those modern arrangements as useless innovations, or abolished these incitements in order to make way for the operation of a purer love of excellence, or still purer love of knowledge, or love of duty superior to either.

There is another and no slight danger, to which this method of education is exposed, in the hands of injudicious or unskilful imitators, and which, though originating in the system, may, by a fatal re-action, directly defeat its object, and at length altogether subvert it. It has, as we have said, been the fundamental aim of the Sessional School, to cultivate the understandings of the pupils, and to treat them as intellectual, not as merely mechanical beings. But, while we ought never to forget, that children are neither machines nor animals devoid of reason, as little ought we to forget, that they are neither philosophers, nor as yet even *men*. While one is a child, he must "speak as a child, understand as a child, think as a child;" and must, therefore, still be treated as a child, and be "fed with milk, and not with meat," until he be "able to bear it." Even the infant mind, indeed, is "able to bear," and to relish, and digest far more than those are inclined to imagine, who have never witnessed its workings in a due state of exercise and vigour. Still, however, it is, and can only be the mind of a child, and not of a perfect man. It must not be crammed with the "strong meats" either of the theologian or the philosopher.

To fix, indeed, precise limits in a matter of this kind, is of course quite out of the question; much in this, as well as in every thing else connected with the education of young people, must depend upon the discretion and skill of the instructor. Great care, however, must obviously be taken, to distinguish between the kind of information and



mode of communication applicable to the younger children, and those which may be employed in the more advanced classes of the same seminary. A single year at the opening of life, it ought ever to be remembered, makes a prodigious difference in the capacity of the human mind. So also in schools, where children are retained till they arrive at twelve or fourteen years of age, a much wider range of information may be attempted, than would be at all proper where they leave it at eight or nine. In a school, also, for children of the humbler ranks of life, whose whole education is in all probability to be confined within its walls, it may be advisable to crowd a greater quantity of useful information into a narrow space, than will be either necessary or expedient, in the case of those more highly favoured individuals, whose circumstances hold out to them the prospect of a more protracted education, and leisure for a more gradual, extensive and systematic course of study. But nothing, in short, can be more injurious to the young, draw down greater ridicule on any system of education, or give more countenance to the old and pernicious practice of learning by *rote*, than a teacher indulging his own vanity, or that of his pupils and their friends, by allowing them to converse, to read, or to write, upon subjects altogether beyond the capacity of their years.

Before closing these introductory observations, there is still one very prevalent error relative to the school in question, to which it seems necessary to advert. It has been pretty generally imagined, that

the success of this institution is principally to be attributed to adventitious circumstances, and that it is one of those indigenous productions, which it were vain to think of transplanting into a different soil, even though blessed apparently with a more genial atmosphere. "Where else," it is constantly asked, "can we expect to find children displaying at once such talent, such diligence, such alacrity; teachers capable of producing such results; superintendants stooping to such mean drudgery?" So strongly indeed are many imbued with a notion of the transcendent genius of the boys in Market Street, that hypotheses, and even less pardonable fictions, have been resorted to and industriously propagated, for the purpose of accounting for this extraordinary concentration of talent. We have also heard it stated, and we believe on the best grounds, that a very able and benevolent admirer of the Sessional School had desisted from an attempt to introduce the like mode of instruction into a seminary in his own neighbourhood in the country, assigning as a reason, that he found no "clever boys" in that school. Had our excellent friend's perseverance been equal to his talents and philanthropy, there cannot be the slightest doubt, that he would soon have beheld the very urchins, of whose qualifications he was once induced to form so low an estimate, transformed into the "clever boys," whose absence he so much deplored. With regard to the superior endowments, which are supposed to be essential to a teacher under the system in question, it may be sufficient to observe, that, while such a mode of tuition

undoubtedly affords ample scope for the exercise, under judicious control, of the highest qualifications, it seems no less certain, that there is none, in which the most moderate talents and acquirements can be employed to greater advantage. A system, indeed, so extremely simple and unartificial, seems peculiarly adapted to the latter situation, and may accordingly be carried into execution by instructors but little advanced either in years or experience, as is daily exemplified in the case of our own monitors. The superintendence, too, to which so much importance has been ascribed, however useful in the infancy of an experimental system, in order to ascertain the extent to which the experiment may be carried, is obviously by no means essential to the system itself, and may with perfect safety, nay perhaps in general with advantage, be surrendered into the hands of a judicious teacher, especially where the emoluments of his situation are in any way made dependant upon the success of his own exertions. All this, however, cannot long continue a matter of mere theory and speculation. The mode of instruction in question is no longer confined to one establishment. Its leading principles are every day more and more generally adopted, and still perhaps more generally professed, in the education of all classes of the community, and of both sexes ;\* in pub-

\* We had recently the pleasure of witnessing a most beautiful specimen of the adaptation of this system to the instruction of young ladies, at the school of Mrs. DUNCAN in this city. The correctness of her pupils' answers to every question put to them relative to what they read, we have scarcely ever seen surpassed ;

lic schools and hospitals ; \* in domestic circles, and even in the instruction of a single child ; under the tuition of men of the highest talents and acquirements ; of ladies instructed only in the ordinary branches of female education ; of lads whose whole education was obtained within the walls of the Sessional School ; and even of boys who are still scholars in that seminary. That uniform success is to be expected in every case where these principles are adopted or professed to be adopted, we are very far indeed from pretending to assert. We have already sufficiently expressed our conviction, that, from misapprehension of the principles themselves, even where they are most warmly advocated and most zealously professed, or from want of judgment and discrimination in the execution, failures are to be expected ; but, from all which we have yet seen, as well as from the nature of the thing itself, we are more and more convinced of its general adaptation, and, so far from imagining, that it has been exhibited in our own seminary in its most perfect form, anticipate from it far more important results, than our humble efforts

though the passages were all selected, and the examination upon them (one of the most trying nature) conducted exclusively by strangers.

\* These principles were at a very early period adopted with success in most of the children's hospitals in this city. Since the original appearance of the present work, they have taken a far wider range ; and we have *now* particular gratification in announcing, that they have been hailed with the most flattering approbation by the Directors of The British and Foreign School Society, who have avowedly grafted them, (we know not to what extent) upon their own arrangements in their leading Seminary in the metropolis. From every part of this and of the sister is-

could ever have attempted to achieve, when it shall be carried into execution by abler hands and in a higher sphere.

land, the Author is daily receiving the most satisfactory accounts, both by direct communications and from newspapers, of the successful propagation of this method of instruction. In America, too, the present work has been republished and reviewed with much approbation.



## CHAP. I.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE EDINBURGH  
PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS.

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Is it then fitting that one soul should pine  
 For want of culture in this favoured land ?  
 That spirits of capacity divine  
 Perish, like seeds upon the desert sand ?  
 That needful knowledge, in this age of light,  
 Should not by birth be every Briton's right ?—SOUTHEY.

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THE EDINBURGH PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS of which the daily SESSIONAL SCHOOL now forms an important branch, derived their appropriate origin from a part of that venerable establishment, which, (even the strongly attached member of another church may be pardoned for observing,) has ever justly accounted it among her proudest boasts, to have made the education of the youth of every class of her people one of the earliest and fondest objects of her maternal care.

Scarcely had the atrocious scenes of riot and of bloodshed, by which our northern metropolis was disgraced on the morning of 1st January 1812, disclosed the lamentable extent of youthful depravity

in that city, when its established clergy, with a zeal and promptitude worthy of their church, stood forward to oppose to the violence of the torrent, that best, and surest, and only bulwark, of which the wisdom of their pious forefathers had laid the foundation,—the Education, and particularly the Religious Education of the poor. At a meeting, accordingly, of the Ministers of Edinburgh, forthwith convened for the purpose, this highly important matter was brought under their consideration by Dr. Inglis, one of the brightest living ornaments of the Church of Scotland, upon whose suggestion a committee was appointed to draw up a scheme of Parochial Institutions for Religious Education, and to communicate upon the subject with the Magistrates of the city. This committee soon afterwards submitted to the consideration of their brethren, the scheme which they had prepared. By that scheme a school was to be opened in each of the parishes of the city, for the Religious Instruction, on the Lord's Day, of the children of the poor, under a teacher to be specially appointed for that purpose by the kirk-session of the parish, who was also to accompany his pupils to the parish church during the hours of divine service, at least in those parishes, where the church contained sufficient accommodation for their reception; the expense to be defrayed by an annual contribution from the inhabitants;\* and the whole to be under the

\* This contribution has hitherto been made exclusively by an annual collection at the church doors.



superintendence of ten Directors, five of whom to be Ministers and five Elders, being a minister or elder from each kirk-session, to be appointed according to a mode of rotation thereby prescribed.

The scheme was no sooner proposed, than it received the cordial approbation of the Clergy and their Sessions, the Magistracy of the City, the Judges of the Supreme Criminal Judicatory, and the inhabitants in general. In the course of the month of March, the Directors were appointed, and the office of Secretary was devolved upon that highly respected individual,\* who, for eighteen years, has continued so faithfully to discharge its important duties, and to whose ability, zeal, and judgment the institution is so deeply indebted, for its existence, its original constitution, and its present welfare. Masters were appointed by the various sessions, and the Sabbath Schools commenced their operations on 26th April. Besides devotional exercises, which were directed to be short, and general reading of the Holy Scriptures, the masters were specially enjoined to instruct their pupils in the Lord's Prayer, The Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Shorter Catechism, Psalms and Paraphrases. By a subsequent regulation, such sessions as thought proper, were allowed to introduce into their schools the Mother's Catechism and Watts' first Catechism, as preparatory to the Shorter Catechism; and, by a still more recent regulation, they were allowed to avail themselves of the Old and New Testament

\* DR. BRUNTON.

Biographies, in the form of Questions, with reference to Scripture for the Answers, which were drawn up primarily for the benefit of these institutions.

Scarcely had the teachers entered upon their duties, when they were met by an obstacle, which does not appear to have been originally anticipated in its full extent. It was found, that a very large number of the pupils admitted into their schools were incapable of reading. This matter naturally called for the serious consideration of the Directors, who remitted to the teachers to report the number of children in their respective schools, labouring under such incapacity. From the report of the Committee appointed to receive these returns, it appeared, "that there were, in the different parishes of Edinburgh, (not including St. Cuthberts or Canon-gate) above three hundred children, who could not read, and who had little chance of instruction; and that this number was probably far below the truth, as several of the returns included only the children actually attending the schools, and it was much to be feared, that there were in each parish many children, who were deterred from attending the Sunday Schools, by the very evil now referred to." On receiving this report, the Directors concurred with the Committee in opinion that it lay with them to correct this evil, and that the most appropriate and effectual remedy, was by forming a new school for the purpose, and annexing it to the establishment of the parochial institutions. It was subsequently resolved, that five scholars should be admitted into

this school, from each session, *gratis* ; and that ten more, nominated by each session, should have a preferable right of admission, on payment of the school fee, which was fixed at 6d. a month. After considerable delay occasioned by the difficulty of procuring a convenient school-room, this daily school was at length opened in Leith Wynd, on the 29th April 1813, under the name of "THE EDINBURGH SESSIONAL SCHOOL."

The Directors very wisely did not attempt *a priori* to lay down any fixed regulations for this school, but left this matter to be adjusted by their able Secretary and a very small committee, along with the master. That it was to be conducted on the monitorial system was of course anticipated from the first ; because otherwise it was quite impossible, that any school so extensive as this required to be, could be managed by a single master. The modification of that system, which was best understood in this quarter at the time, was that of Lancaster, and this therefore was naturally followed in the arrangements of the school-room, the classification of the scholars, and other external matters of a similar description. But the committee, by adopting these, did not consider themselves bound to take the whole of the Lancasterian system, and wisely rejected whatever appeared to them to be objectionable. Much labour and pains were bestowed by the Secretary, who appears to have well known that, where the interference of Directors is required, they must not attempt merely to issue their orders *ex cathedra*, ignorant of the

difficulties and obstacles, but must put their own hand to the work.

In this situation the school appears to have continued till the year 1815. In the end of that year the Secretary reported to the Directors, that "a narrow inspection of the Central School, Baldwin's Gardens, London, had convinced him, that many parts of the system of teaching practised by Dr. Bell might be introduced with great advantage into the school in Leith Wynd, and, as Dr. Bell was then in Edinburgh, he moved that the Directors should apply for his advice in arranging that school." It was accordingly resolved, that Dr. Bell should be waited upon for this purpose, by the Secretary and by Mr. (now Dr.) Andrew Thomson, whose name it is impossible here to mention without bearing testimony in the strongest manner, not only to the warm support, which he has on all occasions given to this institution, but to his judicious, strenuous, and successful exertions in the cause of education in general. Many highly useful suggestions were made by Dr. Bell, which were afterwards carried into execution by the Secretary and Mr. Thomson, both of whom, in order to assist the teacher in accomplishing so highly important an object, gave for some time daily attendance at the school-room.

In the year 1818, an urgent request was made by Dr. Bell, that the teacher of the Sessional School should be sent to St. Andrew's, for the purpose of inspecting a Madras school there, which was agreed to ; and, in consequence of the visit which followed,

still farther improvements were made on the external arrangements of the school.

The author's first acquaintance with the Sessional School arose from his connexion with the Society for Suppression of Begging, who had placed at that seminary the Children that were under their care. It was at that time in its first stage, and was taught by a Mr. Brown. The Writer's visits at this period, though few, impressed him with a very high opinion of the utility of the monitorial system, if rightly conducted, in furthering the important object of general education. He also paid several visits to the school, after it had received the improvements suggested by Dr. Brunton on his return from London, when it was under the tuition of Mr. Bathgate, now one of the burgh teachers in Peebles, and was satisfied that it had indeed in the meantime undergone very great improvements, which amply compensated the meritorious exertions of its Directors. A circumstance soon after this occurred, which rendered his visits to the school daily. In the course of the winter 1819-20, he had a particular charge allotted to him, of the fund subscribed for behoof of the operative weavers, thrown out of employment by the pressure of the times. By a wise resolution of the managers of that fund it was determined, that the *draw-boys* under their charge should be sent to school ; and the very favourable opinion that he entertained, of the high state of order and discipline, to which the Sessional School had been brought by the exertions of its direc-

tors, induced him immediately to suggest that seminary for the purpose. Lads of this description of course required incessant superintendence. In consequence of the regular visits which he thus found to be necessary, he had a good opportunity afforded him of becoming acquainted, both with the conduct and progress of the pupils under his own immediate charge, and also with the general condition of the whole school. He also was induced personally to examine the lads in order to ascertain their proficiency. This was at first done only at intervals, but, as his interest in their improvement increased, became more and more frequent, and at length daily. These examinations awakened in the youth additional ardour, which communicated itself to their companions in the same classes. Mr. Bathgate, whose zeal never allowed him to omit any thing which promised advantage to his school,\* respectfully requested, that he would not confine his attention to these classes only, but would take an interest also in the other classes of the seminary; a wish, which was afterwards also communicated in a most liberal and gratifying manner, in a letter from the Secretary in name of the Directors. In consequence of this

\* The Author eagerly embraces this opportunity of bearing testimony to the cordial and zealous co-operation and support which he has also received from the succeeding teachers in this seminary, and particularly from Mr. Allan, of whose valuable services the institution has, since the original publication of this work, been deprived by their transference to a highly important trust in George Heriot's Hospital.

request, he did not think himself at liberty to close his labours, when the circumstances, which first called them forth, were at an end: and they were accordingly continued.

While he was thus employed, very serious doubts used frequently to come across his mind, whether he was doing all the good, which others were perhaps too easily inclined to imagine. The children were taught, indeed, to read, but the doubt was, whether they had been made such masters of their own language, as in future life to give them any pleasure in reading, or to enable them to derive much profit from it. They had learned their catechism, but were they much wiser with regard to the truths which it contained? The Bible was read as a task, but was it not also, like a task, forgotten? The more he inquired into the actual condition of the lower orders, the more he was convinced, that reading, together with *spelling out* the meaning of what they read, was too formidable an attempt to be frequently resorted to by them; and that even of those who did read, few had recourse to the books calculated to give them the most useful instruction, because they were unable to understand their language; while most resorted to works of a lighter and unfortunately less unexceptionable kind, which they found it not so difficult to comprehend. This evil called loudly for a remedy, which the meagre explanations, introduced along with the other practices of the Madras System, (however useful to a certain limited extent,) did not supply. He therefore felt an extremely strong anxiety to give the school more

of an intellectual tone, not only in order to enable the pupils better to understand what they read there, but also to give them a taste for profitable reading, and make them understand whatever they should afterwards have occasion to read. The task did not appear to him to be without difficulty, nor was he unconscious of the presumptuous nature of any such attempt upon his part. Still, however, if he left it untried, the opportunity which he now possessed, of doing something however little in this way, might be entirely lost. Were he to content himself with proposing the scheme to others, it might, and in all probability would, be treated as visionary. He, therefore, resolved silently to do his best. And so silently indeed, and with so little stir did the thing proceed, that neither the Directors, nor even the Master, knew what was going on, till they heard the children of the highest class, to whom he first confined his attempt, answering questions of an unusual nature. In the commencement of the attempt, he received even far stronger proofs, than he had at all previously anticipated, of its extreme necessity. He found, that he had by no means formed an adequate conception of the gross misapprehensions, into which even the ablest children fall, regarding the meaning of what they read. He saw of course still more strongly the necessity of perseverance; and, in order the better to accomplish his object, he, with the cordial approbation of the Directors, compiled a new school-book, better adapted to his purpose, than the highest one at that time in use. As soon as it was sufficiently proved, that the plan



was both practicable and beneficial, a series of works was prepared for the same purpose, and with the like approbation. The result is well known to all who are acquainted with the school. He shall only now remark, that those who imagine, that it was from the first anticipated by him in its full extent, pay a compliment to his discernment, to which he feels that he can have no just claim. A far more moderate degree of success was all he then ventured to expect, and an insurance to that extent would have amply satisfied him.

Along with the improvements in the reading department, the author was at the utmost pains also to give additional life to that of arithmetic. Perhaps he should rather say, that his labours in the latter department took the precedency, for it was in this that there originally appeared to him most necessity for some additional incentive, and it was through this medium that *that* energy was first infused into the pupils, which afterwards pervaded every department. Soon afterwards, also, grammar and geography were introduced, in a manner that will hereafter be explained.

In consequence of the strong desire, which the children now manifested for reading, the Directors, on 13th February 1823, annexed a small circulating LIBRARY to their institution. This library has proved a source of the highest pleasure as well as of the most valuable information, to the pupils. Times without number, when examined by strangers on matters, which, we were aware, had not fallen under their instructions in school, have we heard

them return answers which surprised us, and on inquiry we found, that this information had been derived from their Library.

The original school-room in Leith Wynd having at length been found quite insufficient, to contain all the children, who applied for admission, and a very strong desire having been expressed by the public, to see the institution accommodated in a manner more worthy of the high reputation, which it had acquired, the Directors, on 13th January 1824, resolved to apply to this purpose the little capital which they had acquired from the bequests of several benevolent individuals, and particularly of Mr. Roland and Mr. Kinnear. A most convenient site was accordingly procured without delay, on which they erected their present very neat and commodious school-room, into which the children, preceded by their Directors, walked in procession from Leith Wynd on 29th November.

On 1st April 1825 the Directors opened an evening school, for the benefit of individuals more advanced in life, who had not at an earlier period enjoyed the advantages, which the day-school holds out to the children of the poor, or who were desirous to prosecute these advantages to a greater extent. This school, which is open every evening, except Saturday and Sunday, from 8 to 10 o'clock, to all who pay the moderate fee of 3s. per quarter, or 1s. 6d. per month, is now none of the least interesting or important branches of the establishment. We have in more instances than one, seen, at this seminary, the parents of children who were then in attendance

upon the day-school ; and have now, as on a former occasion, a father and son together in the evening school. The branches of education taught in the evening school, are reading with English Grammar, general knowledge of the English Language, and explanations of the subjects on which they read, arithmetic, writing, and geography.\*

\* To these branches, the Author has now the pleasure of stating, another has been added far more important than all. He means Religious Knowledge. The gratification which he feels in making this statement is much enhanced by the consideration that this addition was made on the suggestion of the young men themselves ; from a consciousness of their own inferiority in this department to the younger pupils attending the Sunday Evening School. To facilitate this arrangement, the advanced class now meets for the same purpose every Sunday Morning at nine o'clock.

## CHAP. II.

## ON THE EDINBURGH PAROCHIAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

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“The poor have the gospel preached to them.”

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IN the preceding chapter we mentioned, that SUNDAY SCHOOLS were originally the principal, if not the exclusive, object of the Edinburgh Parochial Institutions. To this important branch of the establishment we shall therefore first call the attention of our readers. And here, in opening, it may be right to notice a *general objection*, which has been made to all schools of this description. It has been said, that it is an improper thing to take the religious education of the young out of the hands of their parents, and to devolve this important duty upon any stranger. And doubtless, whatever may be said of the *application* of this principle, the principle itself appears to be perfectly sound, and to be strongly founded on a right knowledge of human nature. It has with equal truth and elegance been observed,\* that “it is not in the church,”

\* Alison's Sermons.

and the observation is alike applicable to the school,  
“ that the great task of religious education can be  
“ fully accomplished. It is under your own roofs,  
“ under your own eyes, and in the sacred retirement  
“ of your own homes. It is you alone, who can know  
“ the various characters of your little children, and  
“ follow the progressive opening of their minds, and  
“ adapt all your instructions to their wants and their  
“ capacities. It is you alone, who are with them al-  
“ way, who can seize the happy moment, when in-  
“ struction will best be received, and avail yourselves  
“ of all the little incidents of life, from which wisdom  
“ may be gathered ; and above all, it is you alone,  
“ who can convey to them instruction in that tone of  
“ parental tenderness, which no other human voice  
“ can imitate, and to which God hath opened every  
“ fountain of the infant heart.” Deeply, therefore,  
is it to be regretted, that any parents, whether in  
the lower or the higher walks of life, whom God  
hath blessed with the means of personally convey-  
ing religious instruction to their offspring, should  
from any cause whatever,—whether from indolence,  
indifference, or mistaken diffidence, from a desire to  
spend their own Sunday evenings at sermons, or  
prayer-meetings, or Sabbath schools, or in idle gos-  
sip, or worldly cares, or dissipation, but ill suited to  
the sanctity of the day,—entirely delegate to the Sab-  
bath-teacher, the tutor, or the governess, that sa-  
cred trust, which God and nature have so obviously  
reposed in themselves. But, on the other hand, it  
ought never to be forgotten, how many hundreds of  
children there are in every large town, nay, how

many children in every parish, who have no parents that can or will take the trouble of instructing them. With regard to these, the question is not whether they shall be taught by their parents or by strangers; but whether they shall be sent to school or not be taught at all,—whether, in a Christian land, they shall be suffered to continue in a state of hopeless ignorance and depravity, curses to themselves, to their parents, and to the public; or, by means of a religious education, be rescued from this degrading and wretched condition, and have an opportunity at least offered them, of becoming useful members of society, and faithful servants of their God. Such being the real state of the alternative, there can surely be no room for hesitation; and as little ground does there seem to be for doubt, that on no quarter can the duty of supplying a remedy more appropriately devolve, than on the parish pastor and his session. Far be it from us to exclude others from this walk of benevolence. But we are at the same time humbly of opinion, that, in all large communities at least, it is the duty, no less than the wisdom, of the established clergy, to provide seminaries under their own immediate eye and superintendence, for the instruction of the young and the ignorant in the principles of divine truth.

In so far as the success of any institution can depend upon its system of superintendence and control, we know no arrangement better calculated to ensure it, than the one which was devised for the regulation of the schools now under consideration. Each of them is under the immediate management

of its own parish minister and his session, subject, however, to the control and regulation of the general Directors of the whole establishment, consisting, (as was explained in the preceding chapter) of a minister or elder sent as a delegate from each session. In the session is vested the nomination of the teacher, with full power of removal at pleasure. It is their duty to send to the Sabbath school all such children within their parish, as stand in need of this method of instruction. It is their duty also to give personal attendance at the school by rotation, a duty, which, on account of their number, can occasion no great hardship to any individual, and by which any negligence or deviation from established rules must almost necessarily be detected; besides being of infinite importance in animating the exertions both of the teacher, and of the scholars. Here, however, the control does not stop. The general Directors also regularly nominate two of their own number, a clergyman and a layman, as visitors, whose duty is personally to inspect, from time to time, all the schools under their superintendence, to inquire into the state of attendance both of the elders and of the pupils, the qualifications of the master and the proficiency of the children, and to report to their brethren the condition in every respect, of all and every part of their establishment. If their report of the state of any particular school be unfavourable, the Directors first remonstrate with the session on the subject; and if, notwithstanding such remonstrance, any glaring irregularity or defect be suffered to remain, the allow-

ance made for the support of that school is then withdrawn. Nor is this power of withholding supplies a mere dead letter, but one, on the contrary, which the Author knows to have been both exercised and recognised.

It has been mentioned, that, under this system, a Sabbath school was opened in every parish of the city. No child, accordingly, can have any great distance to go in quest of this mode of instruction; and the limits of the parish were thus obviously pointed out to each session and its teacher as the bounds, within which they ought to exercise their influence, in drawing children to their own parochial school. Thus far these schools were founded upon the principle of *locality*. That principle, however, seems never to have been carried, under these institutions, to the extent of precluding any teacher, from receiving into his school the children of another parish, within the city or its neighbourhood, whose parents should give a preference to his seminary. And, though it certainly is preferable, that, where all other considerations are equal, a child should attend the school connected with his own parish, and under the immediate eye of his own parish pastor, still there are many reasons, which seem to render it unwise and improper, to restrict the admission of scholars exclusively to residents within a limited district. Here, as every where, a free competition is not without those obvious benefits, which it is unnecessary now to describe. But, besides these, there are particular circumstances con-



nected with religious instruction, which render a liberty of selection in that matter peculiarly expedient. Most persons would startle at the idea of excluding adults from every place of worship but their own parish church: and it is equally natural, that parents should be allowed to indulge a similar liberty of choice, with regard to the religious instruction of their offspring. Many will send their children to a particular master, who would not be induced to send them to any other. This may arise from a variety of circumstances; such as their personal acquaintance with the teacher, his having been their own instructor, or being at the moment the daily instructor of their children, the high reputation of his school in general, or its usefulness, real or imaginary, in some particular instance,—to say nothing of the influence of mere whim and caprice. Nay, there are many, who could be easily enough induced to send their children, to almost any other school, than the one in their immediate vicinity. This also may arise from a variety of circumstances; such as personal dislike to the teacher, a desire that their children may not be at the same school with those of some of their neighbours, with whom, on account of bad character, or mere feuds of vicinage, they have been forbidden to associate, and a thousand others of a similar kind, which may be easily imagined. Strong, however, as these objections are, to the application of too rigid a system of locality, in the original admission of pupils, the objections appear still stronger to its operation, in the case of those, who have already

been admitted. Every one, at all acquainted with the condition of the lower ranks in great cities, must know how fluctuating their place of residence is. If, therefore, upon every removal beyond the precise limits of a district, a child must also be removed from the district school, it is obvious how often it will happen under such a system, that the teacher and the pupil must be separated at the very time, when they are becoming acquainted with each other, and when the usefulness of their relationship is only about to commence. From these considerations, accordingly, the principle of rigid locality has, it is believed, even in those schools which were originally subjected to its operation, been in some instances modified, and in others entirely abandoned.

It is proper at the same time to remark, that the observations, which have now been thrown out, on the subject of the principle of locality, are applicable only to those institutions, which have for their sole object the instruction of the children in school, and the superintendence of their conduct while there. If indeed, besides this superintendence, (including such occasional communications with the parents as the conduct of the children may require), a more extensive system of management be deemed practicable and expedient,—a general *surveillance* of their whole behaviour, not only in but out of school, and an habitual knowledge of the circumstances and condition, both of the young people themselves, and of the other branches of their families,—then, doubtless, an extremely rigid system of locality be-

comes absolutely essential ; a very large number must be found, of zealous, active, intelligent, and prudent men, able and willing to discharge duties at once so laborious, so arduous, and so delicate ; and the sphere of each must be confined within much narrower bounds, than would either be necessary, or at all desirable, for the mere purposes of a school.

There is another part of the system of the Parochial Institutions, which we are aware, has sometimes been made the subject of animadversion. It has been said, that the religious instruction of the poor ought to be "a labour of love," and that it is highly improper, nay even impious and sinful, either to offer or accept any pecuniary remuneration for the discharge of this benevolent duty. To this objection, in so far as regards the alleged impiety, no answer, it is presumed, can be necessary, for the satisfaction of those, who acknowledge the high authority, upon which it has been declared, that, in spiritual things, no less than in temporal, "the labourer is worthy of his hire." With them, accordingly, the question must resolve itself into one merely of economy and expediency. And in judging of this, as well as of every other, branch of economy, we must not permit ourselves too hastily to give way to those narrow and partial views, which overlooking more remote, but, at the same time, more important consequences, are too apt to take for granted, that the cheaper must also be the wiser policy. What office, indeed, is there, from that

which fills the throne, down to the occupation of the meanest scavenger, of which, in some moment of spleen, it has not been said, (and that too with much apparent plausibility,) that good enough persons could be procured, to discharge the duties at a much cheaper rate? Such notions, however, more enlarged views will, in many cases, discover to be visionary and fallacious. Wherever, along with the duties of a delegated trust, we would, at the same time, ensure a strict *responsibility* for the faithful discharge of those duties, according to the rules prescribed, (and in no department assuredly, is this responsibility more essential, than that which relates to religious instruction,) it will as a general rule, be found highly advisable to allow the functionary some adequate remuneration for his services. The man, who regards himself as conferring a favour upon his employers, will not easily brook any interference upon the part of those, whom he thinks he has laid under an obligation. Overrating, as is too often the case, the merit of his own gratuitous services, he will be apt to spurn the counsel, and feel indignant at the rebuke, of those, whom he deems so much less meritorious than himself: while they, on the other hand, from a mistaken feeling of delicacy towards one placed in this situation, will be too much disposed to pass over in silence instances either of neglect or deviation, which, thus allowed to grow up into habits, must prove at length deeply injurious, and, indeed, utterly subversive of any regulations, however salutary, which may have been made for the government of the seminary.

It may be asked, "Why all this anxious precaution about ensuring responsibility? Does not the teacher give us the strongest assurance of his zeal in the cause, by gratuitously undertaking such labours? Though it is very necessary carefully to watch the motions of men, who may, for the sake of lucre, have obtruded themselves into such a situation, what occasion can there be for a similar anxiety with regard to those, who can be actuated by no such unworthy motive?" To this it may be answered, in the first place, that, in undertaking such employments, it ought to be remembered, men may be actuated by other motives than those either of *immediate* lucre, or of zeal for religion. May they not, for example, be influenced by the desire of earning that reputation, which such labours, especially when discharged gratuitously, so often bring along with them? May they not, still farther be influenced by the desire of obtaining that preferment, to which such reputation may open up a readier access? And even where they are actuated purely by zeal, is there no such thing as "a zeal not according to knowledge," which itself requires to be kept under control? We are well aware, indeed, that, in the present age peculiarly distinguished for this species of philanthropy, the field is in many instances gratuitously occupied by individuals, not more respected for their piety, than for their knowledge, ability, and sound discretion; and we cannot for a single moment be so far misunderstood, as to be supposed to detract either from the merits or the usefulness of their labours, or to de-

sire their discontinuance. Our object is not to blame, but to vindicate ; not to discountenance other institutions, but to protect one which we approve. All we maintain is, that, in establishing a *general* and *permanent* system, (such as the constant exigencies of a large city demand,) its founders, in our humble opinion, acted wisely in rendering it as little as possible dependent upon the character and taste of individuals, the varying fashion of the day, or the channel in which, for the time, the current of benevolence may chance to flow. Nor has this opinion, on the part of the Author, been precipitately formed. He will not disguise from his readers, that, in his zeal for the *daily* school of this establishment, which first attracted his notice, and has ever occupied the greater share of his attention, it has not unfrequently passed through his mind, whether, by cutting off the small salaries of the Sunday school teachers, the fund, which has hitherto been devoted to that object, might not be better employed in purposes connected with the daily seminary ; such as enlarging the library, and many other improvements, which, under present circumstances, he has not considered himself warranted in pressing on the Directors. The more, however, he has reflected upon the subject, the more has he been convinced, that the original plan of the founders of this institution was wisely devised, and ought by no means lightly to be departed from. This opinion too, has been strongly confirmed, not only by what he himself has witnessed elsewhere, but by the sentiments and state-

ments of some of the most able and intelligent of those very individuals, to whose meritorious services, under a different system, the public have been, and, he trusts, will long continue to be deeply indebted.

In one, at least, of the larger Sunday schools of this establishment, (that which meets in the daily school-room in Market-street), the master with the approbation of the Directors, avails himself of the gratuitous services of others as his assistants in the instruction of his pupils. Still, however, the whole responsibility for the conduct of the seminary rests with himself. It is to him all the regulations of the Directors are communicated, and through him, in like manner, would all animadversions be made upon any irregularities, which might be discovered in any part of the room. It is in the matter of teaching alone the others take any part. The devotional exercises, accordingly, are conducted entirely by himself, unless when a minister or preacher of the established church is present, in which case he sometimes avails himself of his assistance. It is the master alone, that provides the books, sees that the school-room is in proper order, preserves the register of the numbers present, makes the weekly report to the Directors, and, in short, performs all those other matters of detail, which we know, his gratuitous assistants would by no means easily be induced to undertake.

Nothing can be of greater importance in the management of a Sunday school, than that the time, which is there spent, should be almost exclusively

occupied in the examination of the pupils, and in easy conversational instruction. That original regulation, accordingly, of the Directors of the Parochial Institutions, by which they specially enjoined their teachers to observe brevity in their devotional exercises, was obviously in itself extremely wise and judicious, and, were it as strictly enforced as it ought, could hardly fail to be attended with the most salutary effects. To implore, indeed, the blessing of the Father of Lights upon all our means of instruction, particularly in so far as regards the knowledge of himself and of his will, is the dictate at once of enlightened reason and of revelation. But assuredly no judicious man, who has any knowledge of the youthful mind, can ever wish, that our school prayers should be of that immoderate length, to which, unhappily, they are so often extended, or think, that the offerings of jaded, impatient, and wandering spirits, can alone be acceptable at the Heavenly shrine. It perhaps would not have been easy for the Directors to have gone further in this matter, and to have given any directions, which would have proved effectual, with regard to the nature of the prayers to be employed in their seminaries. To have prescribed a *set form* for such occasions would, we presume, in a Presbyterian school have been quite out of the question. Yet, could we bring ourselves to believe, that those, who stand most in need of assistance and direction in the discharge of this most important duty, would condescend to form themselves upon any *model* set before them for imitation, we know no quarter, from which



they could better be supplied, than from the clerical Directors of these institutions, with such a model of devotion, at once brief and simple, earnest and impressive, appropriate to the occasion of the meeting, adapted to the age and condition of the worshippers, and calculated to inspire their youthful minds with worthy sentiments of that Being, who is the object of their adoration, and ought also to be the object of their love.

While the founders of this establishment testified so strong an anxiety about the brevity of the devotional exercises, we have no doubt that they would, with at least equal earnestness, have enjoined similar brevity in the *exhortations* of the teachers, had they anticipated (which we think they most properly did not) that there should be any thing at all in their seminaries of the nature of a formal exhortation. No method seems worse calculated than this, for the instruction of the young, in any branch of knowledge, and particularly in religious knowledge. Yet who is there, at all acquainted with the history of Sabbath school teaching, that has not seen and deplored the tendency, on the part of *some* of the teachers of these establishments, to convert them into an *arena* for the display of their own rhetorical powers, particularly in the ample field of polemical theology? The aspirant to a church cannot allow what he deems so favourable an opportunity to pass, of trying, by way of experiment *in corpore vili*, the practice which he hopes hereafter to exercise, in a sphere more worthy of his transcendent talents; while he, on the other hand, whose ambition has never dared to soar so high as to a pulpit, is no less eager to occupy the only

field allowed him, for the improvement and display of the gift which is in him, or which he unhappily imagines to be in him. Both alike quitting, or at least holding subordinate, the more humble and less ostentatious task of examining their pupils and conversing with them, indulge in lengthened harangues of their own, and in presence of old men and beldams gaping with wonderment, and children, gaping no less, though from a quite different cause, "reason high of Providence, Fore-knowledge, Will, and Fate." To some it will appear almost incredible, that any one should ever have thought of rendering a Sunday school, with such auditors as it can in general boast, a field for display. But those, who have a more perfect knowledge of human nature, cannot fail to be aware, that the craving appetite for popular applause is not always peculiarly delicate or fastidious in the choice of its food, and, rather than remain unsatiated, will too often be content to prey on garbage.

Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald  
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean  
And craving poverty, and in the bow  
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,  
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb  
The bias of the purpose.

Nor are the persons, to whom we allude, without their reward. They readily obtain a reputation for superior knowledge and ability, superior sanctity, and superior zeal, which is too often denied to those, who far surpass them in all these qualifications, as well as in modesty, humility, charity, and useful-

ness. Many men, we are persuaded,—some, we know,—superiorly qualified for the communication of religious, as well as all other instruction, to the young, have shrunk from the discharge of a duty, in which they might have proved eminently useful, for no other reason, than because they were led to believe that preaching, not school teaching, was expected from them. By the *Clergy*, indeed, of this city, we have good reason to know, the practice, of which we are here speaking, is neither approved of nor encouraged: and it would be well for the rising generation, that *their* opinion on this subject should be expressed *strongly* upon all suitable occasions, and *authoritatively*, where they have a right to command. Like college lectures to very young students, especially when unaccompanied by examination,\* such exhortations are often extremely unpro-

\* This subject, as regards College Education, has, it is generally understood, occupied much of the attention of the Royal Commissioners lately engaged in the visitation of our Scots Universities. It is one which appears also well worthy of the serious consideration of Directors of Mechanics' Institutes. In some of these, the Teachers are men of distinguished talents and intimate acquaintance with their respective subjects, and their exertions for the benefit of their pupils well entitle them to the highest praise. We may perhaps be pardoned, however, for hinting an opinion that their valuable services might be rendered still more extensively beneficial, if more time and attention were bestowed upon the examination of the students. This is the only method, by which an instructor can rightly know, whether his instructions are level to the capacities of his pupils. These hints, it may be proper to add, have, in a great measure, been suggested by conversations with some of the students themselves; who, widely differing from each other in natural capacity and previously acquired advantages, concurred decidedly in the views, which are now attempted to be enforced.

fitable. Nor are the objections to them entirely removed (as some have erroneously imagined) by being delivered in a familiar language, and in a familiar tone and manner. To say that they are essential to religious instruction is absurd in itself, as well as contrary to experience. In one of the schools of this establishment, where this practice once prevailed to a great extent, it has for several years past been entirely abolished. Scarcely in any one instance during that period has the instructor spoken two sentences together, without the intervention of the pupil. Yet, surely, no one will allege, that in that seminary the children are now *less* acquainted than before with the truths of religion. Neither let it be imagined, that the moral reflections and practical inferences from these great truths, can be either more affectionately or more permanently impressed on the minds of the young, by that dull and tedious prosing, which is so frequently resorted to for that purpose, than by easy and familiar conversation between the instructor and his pupils. What, indeed, should we think of the parent who, in place of conversing with his child on these momentous subjects, should think of delivering to him a long and formal harangue? But the examination of children, it is sometimes objected, is a peculiar talent for which all are by no means qualified. Let those, we answer, who are not qualified for it, desist from undertaking the office of catechists, in obedience to the Apostolic injunction, "He that teacheth, let him wait on his teaching; he that exhorteth, on exhortation."

## CHAP. III

## SUNDAY SCHOOLS CONTINUED.

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In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness: The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel: They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. ISAIAH.

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OF all the methods of instructing the young in religious knowledge, (and perhaps we may add in every other species of knowledge,) CATECHISING appears to us to be at once by far the most interesting, and the most profitable. By this, however, we trust, we shall be understood as recommending something more, than merely reading, from a book denominated a catechism, a certain number of prescribed questions, and hearing the child repeat by rote the words, which are set down for him, in the same book, as answers to these questions. We here employ the term in its more comprehensive signification, "to instruct, by asking questions, and correcting

the answers.”\* At the same time we are far from asserting, that “a form of sound words,” drawn up on the principle to which we have referred, when rightly employed, and holding only its proper place in religious education, is by any means without its use. On the contrary, we think it wise in every church to have formularies of its own of this description, to serve both as text-books and standards for its young members; as *text-books*, to secure their attention being called to those fundamental truths, without which Christianity might be reduced to a meagre and lifeless system of ethics; as *standards*, to guard their minds as much as possible from error of opinion, with regard to these essential points. Much were it to be wished, however, that all such works, as are put into the hands of children, should be compiled exclusively for their benefit, and with reference to their age and capacity. Perhaps it would be of advantage, that there should be more than one composition of this kind, one for younger children, and one, at least, for more advanced catechumens.

Highly necessary is it, also, to guard against the abuse, which has crept into religious education, from the employment of these useful compilations. Too many a parent has unhappily been led to imagine, that he gives his children a sufficient knowledge of religion, when he teaches them “to say their questions.”† And, *how* in general are they

\* Johnson.

† See Miss Hamilton’s Cottagers of Glenburnie.

said? Without one single idea, (we speak literally and sincerely,) attached to the words, which they are most reluctantly compelled to repeat like parrots. How many of our readers will attest, from personal and odious experience, the perfect correctness of the statement, which we have now made! And even the most sceptical with regard to it, will not find it necessary to proceed far in the examination of those educated upon the prevailing system, in order to have his doubts completely removed. He will *sometimes* indeed hear the prescribed words repeated with unvarying accuracy, but, at the same time, with a monotony and defiance of punctuation, that will at once show the absence of all ideas, or, at least, of all just ones. Let him ask a single question in explanation of the answer he has received, or attempt to break it down into parts, he will find it utterly impossible to carry his pupil one step along with him. If the opening words of the answer be not an echo to those of the question, even the verbal repetition will in all probability completely fail. Nor will the pupil, when told that he has erred, ever think of discovering the right answer from its connexion, in point of meaning at least, with the question; but will ask for "the first word,"—will say, and say truly, that he has always been accustomed to be told that word, and will deem it quite unreasonable, that a similar indulgence is not given him also on the present occasion, immediately, and as a matter of course. That word, however, once given, he will move on rapidly, like a machine that has been wound up, and, like it,

perhaps, continue to move till he regularly runs out. But, in some instances, before running out, the automaton may unfortunately become entangled with the answer to a very different question, in consequence of an unhappy coincidence between them in some one expression; and thus, (as the *meaning* with him has nothing to do with the matter,) he may easily be carried away into arrant nonsense, or even the most horrid blasphemy. This is no imaginary case. There are two answers\* in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, particularly liable to this fatality, in consequence merely of mention being made in both, of "the miseries of this life." These answers, (incredible as it may appear,) the Author has himself, not once or twice merely, but over and over again, heard given in the following shocking manner, by various pupils, (and these none of the youngest,) who had previously been accustomed to learn only by rote. "*All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross!*" And again, "*Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under*

\* The correct answers are, "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." And, "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time."



the law, *undergoing* the miseries of this life, death itself, and *the pains of hell for ever !!!*" Nor let it be imagined, that it is only in the case of a particular catechism, or of answers more than commonly intricate, that such a circumstance can occur. In these cases, we readily acknowledge, the danger is much increased. But, with regard to all catechisms, however easy,\* and, in short, every thing else which is allowed to be learned merely by rote, such an incident is most likely to happen, and, in truth, is of daily occurrence. Neither, in such cases, is it always an easy matter to put the automaton right. To do so by pointing out to him, though come to years of sufficient understanding, the absurdity of what he is saying, is, in one inured to these mechanical habits, an idle attempt. Neither must we think of confining his attention to the particular part of his answer where the error lies. He will insist, (like the old woman at Roslyn, or any other daily exhibiter of spectacles, when interrupted), on being allowed to say the whole over again from the commencement, and, in so doing, will perhaps repeat again and again the same palpable nonsense,

\* Others, as well as the Author, may have repeatedly heard the question in the Church of England Catechism, "What is required of persons to be baptized," answered with a tone and punctuation, which would indicate, that, if the respondent had any notion at all upon the subject, (which most probably he had not), he conceived that by repentance he was to forsake *faith* as well as sin; "Repentance whereby they forsake sin and faith, whereby they believe," &c.

probably adding, at the same time, that he "is quite sure it is in that way in his book."

This practice of repeating a catechism merely by memory, without any attempt to understand it, monstrous as it is, has to this hour, like every other old and common practice, some who are ever ready enough to stand up in its defence. By some we have been told, that it is quite necessary that the memory of the young should be exercised, before their judgment is ripened, and that repeating the catechism is surely as good and as trying an exercise as any other. To this defence we have always contented ourselves with answering, that, if the catechism must be repeated before it is understood, it would still be a more trying exercise of memory, and far less prejudicial to the other faculties, to make it be repeated *backwards*. But the common justification of the absurd and pernicious practice is, that it is of no consequence, whether the child understands the thing, at the time he is compelled to repeat it, or not ; " let him learn it now, he will understand it afterwards." If such a proposal as this were made with regard to any other matter, (we mean of course any other in which it has not already received the sanction of habit), would it not at once be universally derided ? What should we say of one, who, having taught his pupil to read and pronounce with propriety the Greek language, without understanding the meaning of a single word, should, in this state, require of him to repeat over the Iliad of Homer, telling him, at the same time, as an encouragement, that it will be a delightful

thing for him to be able to do so, when he comes to understand it !! To say nothing of the torture, to which the poor wretch is, in such a case, subjected, *they* are miserable judges of human nature, who imagine that this early and unmeaning repetition of any thing will afterwards afford the pupil any facility in really learning it. If in riper years a child so educated *can* be induced, (which, we believe, very rarely indeed is the case), to recur to a work, which, under such circumstances, can be connected in his mind with no other than the most displeasing associations, his formal mode of learning, in place of being a facility, will clearly be an obstacle to him. He will find it infinitely more difficult to attach a just meaning to words, which have been long accustomed to pass through his mind without making any impression, (or which, perhaps, have left an erroneous one), than he would have done if he were now to begin the work for the first time. How often, in attempting to hammer into the minds of such pupils the meaning of what they had long learned to repeat, have we wished that they had previously seen as little of the catechism, as some others beside them, who, with very inferior talents, were making far more satisfactory progress. Such, we are persuaded, is likewise the experience of all, who have ever had any practice in teaching upon rational principles. They will, we suspect, in all such cases, be much disposed to concur with a famous musician mentioned by Quintilian, who always charged a double fee for teaching his art to those, who had previously received instruction elsewhere.

But it may be asked, "What is meant by making a child *understand* the truths of religion? Hath not an Apostle acknowledged, that 'great is the mystery of godliness,' and what he found to be mystery shall we pretend to make plain even to the conceptions of children?" Such questions we admit to be at once pertinent and highly important. In order to answer them, it will be necessary to keep in recollection, that there are more senses than one, in which we may be said to understand a thing. We are said for example to understand the narrative of any remarkable phenomenon, when we have received a just conception of the appearances described, though neither ourselves nor the narrator have the slightest notion of the cause of these appearances. A physician is said to understand his profession, when he knows the circumstances, under which certain remedies ought to be applied, in order to effect a cure, and the method of their application, though he may not in many cases be able to account for the mode of their operation. We may in short perfectly understand a thing, in so far as we have any concern in it, while, in other respects, it is itself involved in obscurity. This is a distinction, which cannot be too much attended to in the religious instruction of children, and we might also add, of those of riper years, for all in this imperfect state are at best but grown children. We ought ever to remember, that, in the department of religion, no less than of nature, "there are secret things that belong unto the Lord our God," as well as "things which are revealed, that belong unto us

and our children for ever." Thus we are bound to make those intrusted to our care understand *as a revealed truth*, that by the death of Christ, pardon has been secured to sinners, and to point out to them the authority upon which we make this statement—to show them no less clearly, by the same authority, that in the benefits of his death, no *impenitent* sinner can ever have the slightest hope to participate—and to render them well acquainted with the appointed means by which these benefits may be made available to themselves. But it is quite unnecessary, and would indeed be highly improper, to perplex their minds with any subtle and idle inquiries about *the method*, in which this sacrifice, so clearly revealed, can operate for salvation. Such discussions, we are decidedly of opinion, ought never to be heard in their presence.

It is the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, as one of the standards of the Church of Scotland, which is principally employed in the Parochial Institutions. There is none, perhaps, that stands more in need of the explanations which we have recommended, nor any, with regard to which the caution last given appears to be more necessary\* in offering these expla-

\* Though this Catechism comprehends some of the most abstruse questions which can be agitated, it is somewhat remarkable, that in Scotland it was at one time the very first book, which was put into the hands of children; and to this day it continues to be published by his Majesty's Printers *as an appendage to the alphabet*, with the following title:—"The A B C, with the Shorter Catechism agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to be a Directory for Catechising *such as are of weaker capacity*!"

nations. This Catechism would lose much of its interest and much of its value, were the answer to each individual question to be regarded as a separate and distinct proposition, unconnected with those which precede and follow it; for even of those, who cannot bestow unqualified approbation on this formula, as one peculiarly adapted to the young, there is none, we are persuaded, who ever perused it with attention, without being struck with the admirable beauty of that arrangement, by which all its parts from beginning to end are so closely connected in one regular and unbroken chain.—After showing the connexion of the question immediately under consideration with those which preceded it, the Catechist should next inquire of his pupil the meaning of any particular terms, either in the question or answer, which may appear to stand in need of explanation. If any of these be used in a figurative manner, as, for example, the word *adoption*, it will frequently be of great service to point out also its original acceptation; and, if any be used in a technical sense, it will be peculiarly necessary to point out the difference betwixt that and its ordinary one. Thus, in speaking of “the benefits which *believers* enjoy at death,” or “at the resurrection,” it would be most dangerous for the pupil to be allowed to suppose, that the term “believers” is in such answers applicable to all those, who, on reading or hearing the truths of religion, merely *believe* with their understanding, that all which they have read or heard is true.—After explaining the terms, it will in general be most convenient for the catechist, to break

down the answer into parts, and to satisfy himself that the pupil both understands each individual part and its connexion with the others ; to call upon him to mention any texts of Scripture which he can adduce, (whether set down in his book or not,) as proofs of the doctrine, which is there taught ; and also to direct his attention to any other passages of Scripture, or any other parts of the Catechism, which may either illustrate the present subject, or receive illustration from it. Thus on the pupil repeating the summary, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," the question should be put to him, Who is thy neighbour ? It may then be followed up, by asking, Whether the same question had ever been put before ?\* by whom and to whom ? and what was the answer returned ? By these means he is led into a repetition of the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, by which our Lord endeavoured to remove the selfish prejudices of the Jews upon this subject. Hence also the inquiry naturally arises, Who the Samaritans were ? and in this manner is frequently opened up a wide field for illustration and information, of peculiar service to those who are already well acquainted with the Catechism and its more immediate bearings, affording them an agreeable variety, making the Scripture at once more plain and more pleasing to them, and giving them general habits of attention and interest, with regard to every thing, which they either read or hear. No one, who has not himself practised this method of

\* Luke x.

instruction, either with regard to religious or general knowledge, can have an adequate conception of the extent of information, which may in this most pleasing of all shapes, be communicated, and permanently retained.—If any part of the answer to a question in the Catechism be in the slightest degree *involved* in another, then examination, and (what a lawyer would call) cross-examination, become more than usually necessary. Take for example, the admirable definition of sin, in which it is said to be “any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.” Ask a child who has been accustomed to repeat this definition without any thought, *What* is sin any want of conformity unto? and he will, in all probability, either be utterly unable to return any answer, or else (which is of infinitely more frequent occurrence than most people will easily imagine) will tell you that “it is a want of conformity unto a *transgression* of the law of God!!” Here, after showing the pupil that it is a want of conformity unto the law of God, which is meant, ask him what conformity signifies? then, what is meant by a want of conformity? then, what difference there is between a want of conformity unto the law, and a transgression of the law? then call for an example of each. We have been the more particular in specifying the nature of the examination, because it is by actual trial alone, that the full extent of its necessity can be appreciated. Those even, who have had long experience of the ordinary method, are in general themselves wonderfully ignorant of its inadequacy.—



Above all, before quitting any question, the greatest pains should be taken to see that the pupil is well aware of the practical effects, which the knowledge he is acquiring ought to have upon himself and upon his own conduct. This ought by no means to be confined to the questions upon the moral law. With regard to all passages, on the contrary, where the use of the technical expressions of theology may mislead the thoughtless (perhaps even the thoughtful) pupil, into a most erroneous and dangerous notion, that the unmerited mercy of the Gospel implies in any respect a dissolution of moral *obligation*, such precaution is more than usually necessary. In employing it the catechist will only be imitating the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whose own language on this subject, will, in general, be found by far the most apposite, conclusive, and convincing.

As a specimen of the explanatory examination on the Catechism, which we have been recommending, and which is in practice in the Market Street School, we shall here subjoin such an examination, as we think applicable to the question, "What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?" to which the prescribed answer is "Christ as our Redeemer executeth the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation." Here, after pointing out to the pupil, or rather eliciting from himself the connexion of this question with those which preceded it, he may be asked (if this inquiry has not been previously made), What is the meaning of the word "Redeem-

er," particularly in so far as regards the ransoming of a slave or captive? Whom, and from what, Christ came to redeem? What price he paid? What name this price receives in Scripture? He may then be required to quote any of the passages he remembers in which this expression is employed. He may next be called on to define the terms "prophet," "priest," "king," "humiliation," "exaltation." After this he may be asked, In which of his estates our Saviour has executed the office of a prophet? How he executed this office in his state of humiliation? [And, on this point, if there be leisure, or the child's previous acquaintance with the more immediate subjects of the Catechism renders a more rigid adherence to these unnecessary, he may be farther asked, To what classes of people our great Prophet preached while on earth? Whether it was anywhere of old predicted that Messiah should preach his Gospel to the poor? Whether Christ ever applied these passages to himself? and on what occasions? And here the child, especially if of the lower orders, may in a single sentence be reminded of the gratitude due for a system of religion so adapted to all conditions of men.]—The pupil may next be asked, How Christ executeth the office of a prophet in his state of exaltation? In which of his estates he has executed his office of a priest? How he executed this office in his state of humiliation? What was the victim? What name our Saviour receives in Scripture in consequence of being himself the victim? Mention may be required of some of the passages, in which this expression is employed, the per-

sons by whom, and the occasions on which it was so employed, as for example the memorable conversation of John Baptist, with his disciples. [And here also inquiry may be made into the ancient practice of sacrifice, and particularly the institution of the Paschal Lamb.] The catechist may then proceed to ask, How Christ executeth the office of a priest in his state of exaltation? What names he in consequence receives in Scripture? What these names properly import? and what peculiarly qualifies him to execute this part of his office?—In which of his estates he has executed the office of a king? How he executed this office in his state of humiliation? [Whether any of the prophets spake of Christ coming as a king? How this was understood by the Jews? What danger Jesus was exposed to at the time of his birth in consequence of this misunderstanding? What effect it had upon the Jews with regard to their reception of Christ? Whether they ever attempted to make him a king? and what he did in consequence? What he said of his own kingdom? and on what occasion? How Zechariah's remarkable prophecy, "Thy King cometh unto thee," &c. was literally fulfilled? The child may then be asked to relate the particular circumstances of that incident, and have his attention especially called to the part which the children acted on that occasion, and the notice taken of them by the Saviour.] The pupil may next be asked, How Christ executeth the office of a king in his state of exaltation? What obligation the belief in Christ as our prophet necessarily implies on

our part? What obligation the belief in Christ as our priest necessarily implies? and, lastly, What obligation our belief in Christ as our king necessarily implies? Whether, therefore, we can ever hope for acceptance through his sacrifice, while we continue impenitent in sin, and disobedient to the laws of our sovereign?

We do not mean to say, that, in our practice, all these questions are asked on every occasion, or that any one of them is always asked in precisely the same form; and still less do we mean to recommend such a practice to others. Some of them may be asked at one time, and others at another; and the succeeding questions ought in all cases, in a certain degree, to depend upon the nature of the answers returned to the preceding questions. Neither do we mean to say that there is any novelty in this method of breaking down the original questions, and suggesting additional explanatory ones, though the practice has notoriously been far less general than could be wished. Several manuals, accordingly, have been composed upon this principle, particularly in reference to the catechism of the Church of England. Such works, however, we would recommend for the use rather of the catechist than of the catechumen. In the hands of the latter they are liable to become merely a second catechism, and to be, like the other, repeated merely by rote. The conversational system of education can only be perfect, when, (as we have already said), one question is suggested by the answer received to another.

In a former chapter we mentioned that the repe-

tion of the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Creed*, *Psalms* and *Paraphrases* was one of the methods of instruction authorised in the Parochial institutions. Here also, no less than with regard to the Catechism, care ought obviously to be taken, to make the pupil understand what he repeats. What absurd and permanent associations, and what pernicious habits have been gendered by a contrary practice, every one too well knows in his own experience. But this is a subject, to which we shall have occasion to recur, when we come to take the daily school under consideration.

We have also mentioned, that, by a more recent regulation, two little works under the names of the *Old and New Testament Biography*, have been introduced into these schools. These works resemble catechisms in this respect, that they are drawn up in the form of questions ; but they have no answers annexed to them. For these the pupil must have recourse to the Holy Scriptures themselves. And the better to exercise his own discernment, he is referred merely to the chapter, without any mention of the particular verse, where the answer is to be found. This exercise we know to be not only more profitable to the pupil, but far more pleasing, than when he is merely required to repeat a prescribed answer. Nor is he either expected or wished to give the answer in the exact words of Scripture, but in his own language, except in the more remarkable colloquial parts. As a specimen of these works we subjoin the following extract :

" **JOHN THE BAPTIST.**—Do you remember any

“ of the prophecies concerning him ? (Isaiah XL.  
“ Malachi III.—IV.) Who was his father ? and  
“ his mother ? Relate the circumstances attending  
“ his birth. Why did he receive the name of John ?  
“ What is said of him in his early years ? Where  
“ were those years passed ? (Luke I.) What was  
“ the occupation of his riper years ? Where did he  
“ preach ? (Mat. III. Mark I. Luke III.) Was  
“ there any thing particular in his dress ? or in his  
“ food ? (Mat. III. Mark I.) What remark did  
“ the unbelieving Jews make upon the singularity  
“ of his mode of life ? (Mat. XI. Luke VII.) What  
“ duty did he particularly enforce ? (Mat. III.  
“ Mark I. Luke III.) Was he at pains to show  
“ them that repentance implied reformation of life ?  
“ What did he say upon this subject ? (Mat. III.  
“ Luke III.) What answer did he give to the  
“ people when they, before being baptized, asked  
“ what they should do ? What answer did he give  
“ to the publicans, when they asked the same ques-  
“ tion ? What answer did he in like manner give  
“ to the soldiers ? (Luke III.) Who was the prin-  
“ cipal personage that he baptized ? Relate the cir-  
“ cumstances attending that baptism. (Mat. III.  
“ Mark I. Luke III.) What account did the Bap-  
“ tist give of himself ? (John I.) What account  
“ did he give of Christ ? (Mat. III. Mark I. Luke  
“ III. John I.) What did he say when he point-  
“ ed out Christ to his disciples ? Do you remember  
“ who any of these disciples were ? (John I.) What  
“ message did John send to Christ ? What answer  
“ did Christ return ? What account did Christ give

“ of John ? (Mat. XI. Luke VII.) What death  
“ did John die ? Relate the *circumstances*. (Mark  
“ VI. Mat. XVI. Luke IX.)”

We consider it one of the greatest recommendations of compilations of this description, that they lead the young mind to take an interest in the Holy Scriptures, and not to resort to them merely as an act of duty or as to a prescribed regimen. Still, we are far from saying, that they ought by any means to supersede the use of the sacred volume itself in such institutions. As it is only, however, a small portion of it, which such weekly reading can with advantage embrace in the course of a year, it becomes necessary that a selection should be made. In making such a selection, we have found no passages more interesting or instructive, than the discourses of the blessed Lord himself, and particularly his parables. The latter have a peculiar charm for the youthful mind. There is in them an apparent obscurity, which it delights to be able with a little assistance to penetrate ; and, at the same time, the obscurity is so slight, that a very little assistance is all it needs. They are told too in a tone so natural, so familiar, and affecting, as to be peculiarly adapted to the simplicity, the tenderness, and sensibility of our opening years. Our practice has been to make one of these parables be read over to the children by some of their number ; then to ask them what impression it has made upon their own minds : and lastly to put such questions as may tend to its farther elucidation : and on the following Sunday one of the scholars is called upon to repeat the substance

of the same parable in his own words ; and all are again examined upon it. In these examinations, care is taken to make the children understand the import of the parable ; first, with reference to those to whom it was addressed ; secondly, with reference to mankind in general ; and lastly, with peculiar reference to the condition of the young themselves. Take, for example, our Lord's first parable, *The Sower*. The child is asked, who is the sower ? what the seed ? on what kind of soil it first fell ? what would be the natural consequence of seed dropt by the side of a high way ? what class of persons that soil denotes ? what is implied in the expression, " understandeth it not," used by our Lord in describing this class of persons ? [And here, if necessary, it should be explained to the scholars that it may comprehend many, who, like themselves, understand well enough what is meant, and can tell it to others, if they do not allow it to sink down into their hearts, and feel its importance as a thing deeply interesting to themselves.] What was the second soil on which the seed fell ? what would be the natural result of seed sown on " stony ground which has no depth of earth ?" what class of people this soil represents ? what were the persecutions to which Christ more immediately referred in describing this class of persons ? to what sort of persecution at all times even the young may be exposed ? [and here, if necessary, the teacher should point out the dangerous influence of ridicule even upon those who once " received the word with joy."] What was the third soil on which the seed fell ? what would be the likely fate



of grain growing up among thorns? what these thorns represent? what are the cares and the pleasures, which our Lord described, as stifling the right sentiments, which had hitherto sprung up in the mind? whether the young are in any degree exposed to this danger? [and here, if necessary, should be pointed out the danger of an over-fondness for play; and also the impropriety of allowing their minds to be so much occupied with the desire of excelling in other branches of knowledge, however valuable in themselves, as to leave no leisure for the acquirement of that higher wisdom, which is from above.] What was the last soil on which the seed fell? what class of persons it represents? [*This description*, we think it desirable, should be given as nearly as possible in the beautiful, comprehensive, and easily remembered words of our Lord himself as described by St. Luke.] What is meant by an "honest and good heart" in our Lord's description of them?

The only other remark which occurs to us on the subject of the parochial Sunday schools is, that the instruction conveyed in them is purely and exclusively religious. Whatever may have been the advantages occasionally derived in other quarters, from permitting those, who might otherwise have never been instructed in reading, spelling, or writing, to acquire those arts at the Sunday school, this, with us, is happily quite unnecessary. The benefits of general instruction are here, on the other days of the week, within the reach of all. And there can there-

fore be neither any necessity nor propriety, in permitting the slightest encroachment to be made on those feelings of reverence for the Sabbath, which have so long distinguished the people of Scotland.

## CHAP. IV.

## THE EDINBURGH SESSIONAL DAILY SCHOOL.

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“ Would you do a handsome thing without return ; do it for an infant that is not sensible of the obligation : would you do it for public good ; do it for one who will be an honest artificer : would you do it for the sake of Heaven ; give it to one who shall be instructed in the worship of Him for whose sake you gave it.”  
 —STEEL.

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THE Edinburgh Sessional Daily School (as we have already intimated) was instituted in 1813, for the instruction of the children of the lower classes of society in the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Those, whose parents are certified by their kirk-session to be quite unable to pay for their education, are admitted *gratis*. For all others the small fee of sixpence per month is given. It was made thus small, in order that there might be as few *gratis* admissions as possible, it being the opinion of the Directors that gratuitous education is seldom sufficiently valued, and is on this account by far the least profitable of any. This opinion has been amply confirmed in their own experience, as well as we believe in the experience of all, who have ever witnessed the effects of this kind of education, as compared with that which has been paid for by the parent. Every day, accordingly, gratuitous

admission is, in this seminary, more and more discouraged. There are few parents, who, on being informed of the trifling nature of the fee, do not readily pay it, rather than ask that their children should be admitted on any other footing; to those who do make such application it is always distinctly explained that it is listened to in the case of pauperism only; and even for those who are in this condition, benevolent and judicious persons very frequently see the propriety of paying the fee themselves, from a conviction that education bestowed in this way (though by no means so desirable as when paid for by the parent) is much more valued and improved than when it has not been paid for at all. The number of admissions on the gratuitous roll is, in consequence of these circumstances, now proportionally small.

The number of children actually attending the school has varied from about 200 to 600. The largest number ever present on any one day was 619. There is no limitation with regard to the age of the pupils attending this seminary. Those at present in attendance are of all ages from between 4 and 5 to 12 or 14. The INFANT SCHOOL about to be opened in this city, will in all probability, relieve the Sessional School of many of its young pupils.\* Regarding the expediency of such institutions for the education of infants, much difference of opinion, we are well aware,

\* The circumstance referred to in the text, joined to the establishment of schools in almost every district of the town upon the plan of that in Market Street, has considerably diminished the average number of pupils in attendance upon our daily school.

has been entertained. For ourselves, we are by no means friendly to any *unnecessary* separation between the mother and her child at so early a period. But, in such a population as every large city contains, a separation of this kind must, and we know does, frequently take place in its lower classes. In absence of the parents the poor infants are either locked up at home in a state of much unhappiness, and exposed to those accidents from fire, of which we daily hear of so many lamentable instances,—or secondly, they are locked out, and are thus exposed to the still more numerous accidents, that await them in the streets, as well as to the no less formidable dangers arising from evil contagion,—or lastly, (which we know to be a frequent occurrence,) their elder brothers and sisters are detained from school to take charge of them, and thus the whole family are left in total ignorance. For these reasons, children have been admitted into the Sessional School at an earlier period, than was well suited to the arrangements of such a seminary. We therefore consider an infant school to have been hitherto a *desideratum* in this city. Nor do we deem it any good objection to such institutions, that the children, who are there trained, are as yet in a great measure incapable of acquiring the mechanical instruction, which is generally communicated in ordinary schools. On the contrary, we are inclined to think that one objection to the infant schools hitherto established, is, that too much of this kind is there attempted, and that the public displays, which have been made of the proficiency of the

children in these acquirements have been rather prejudicial to the cause of infant education. The leading objects of such institutions, we conceive, should be to afford amusement, to inculcate right habits and principles, and communicate only such instruction as can be given in the most familiar manner. On this subject we shall only add, that, while we are perfectly convinced of the necessity of such establishments for the lower classes, we entirely disapprove of the attempt, which is now making in this city, to establish similar institutions for the higher ranks. We consider that the early separation of parent and child may be a matter of necessity, but ought by no means to receive encouragement where such necessity does not exist. Nor is it a sufficient answer, that at this moment the infants of the higher and middling classes of society are too much neglected by their parents, and left to the charge of menials. The observation may unhappily be well founded in point of fact, but we should be extremely unwilling to give either countenance or facility to the extension of so gross an abuse.

The children in the Sessional School are all under the tuition of one master, who conducts the school on the monitorial system of mutual instruction. The external details are, we believe, in most leading points, nearly the same with those, which are in use in the national schools in England. But the Directors have never had any hesitation in deviating from these, when others appeared in any respect better adapted to their own purpose. Such deviations we are well aware, have sometimes been

regarded with other feelings than those of approbation. But if, in the quarter to which we allude, it had been deemed of the slightest consequence to go beyond the externals, and to vouchsafe one look at those weightier matters, which have ever occupied the greater share of attention with the conductors of this Institution, it is not unlikely, (according to every information which we have received), that a much greater difference might have been discovered, than in mere points of external form.

The tables (as in the Madras or National school system) are placed round the walls of the school-room, and the remainder of the floor is left quite unoccupied by furniture, except the master's desk, and such seats as may be necessary for the use of visitors. One half of the scholars always sit at the desks with their faces to the wall, employed in learning to write or cipher, while the other half stand on the floor, either reading or practising the rules of arithmetic. Thus, it will be observed, seats are required only for one half of the scholars, and convenient accommodation is afforded to a far greater number, than could be obtained under any other arrangement. The classes on the floor are ranged in segments of circles behind each other, fronting the master's desk, which is at the head of the room; and, in front of each class, are placed the teaching monitor and his assistant, whose duty is to preserve order and attention.

At five minutes before ten every morning (except Sunday) the school bell is rung, the monitors or assistants having previously arranged the books

and slates, and prepared the pencils, for their respective classes. Every boy enters with his hat slung round his neck. The elder division of the school take their places for reading on the floor, and the other division stand beside their seats with their faces from the wall. Precisely at the hour of ten in the school clock the doors are closed for prayer, which is offered up by the master. That duty having been performed, the words of command are successively given, "recover slates," "sling slates," "recover books," "give pencils," "second division, seats." The classes of the elder division then proceed to read, spell, explain, or learn grammar, &c. under their respective monitors, while the children of the second division write or cipher until half-past ten. At that time the first division are marched to their seats, and the second division occupy their places on the floor, an evolution which is performed in about a minute and a half. The second division then proceed to read or spell, and the first to write till 11 o'clock, when another shift takes place. From 11 to 12, the first division practise arithmetic on the floor, while the second write at the tables. At 12, the scholars are marched out in a double row, the division on the floor and that at the seats moving out together at the same time. After a short interval, an extra lesson is given to the monitors, assistants, and higher scholars, till 5 minutes before 1. At that time the classes return and resume their places, the higher division on the floor, the second beside the seats. Precisely at 1, the necessary orders are given for



slates, books, pencils, and seats. The first division read, &c. and the second write till 2 o'clock. The books are then grounded; the second division rise; and a roll is called by each monitor of the names of the boys in his class, and opposite to every boy's name is entered in the register the place he holds, unless in the case of absence, which is denoted by the letter *a* being placed opposite to his name. This operation being completed, which is done in less than 3 minutes, the divisions are shifted. The second division read, &c. on the floor, and the first division write at the tables till 3. At that hour, after the necessary orders, the head monitor says the Lord's Prayer, which is repeated along with him reverently, and in a low tone of voice, by the whole scholars. The school is then dismissed for the day.\* On Saturday, the roll is called at half-past 10, the Lord's Prayer is said at 12, and the school then dismissed, except the monitors, assistants, and elder scholars, who then receive their extra lessons.

We shall, in the subsequent chapters, proceed to notice more particularly the circumstances connected with this school, under the heads,—DIRECTORS, MASTER, MONITORS, CLASSIFICATION, REWARDS, PUNISHMENTS, EXPLANATORY SYSTEM, READING and SPELLING, DAILY RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, GRAMMAR, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, GEOGRAPHY, PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS, and HOLIDAYS.

\* After a short interval the Geographers commence their voluntary lesson.

## CHAP. V.

## THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF DIRECTORS.

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Taking the oversight not by constraint, but willingly ; neither as being lords.—ST. PETER.

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As the Daily Sessional School embraces the whole city, and has no particular connexion with any one of its parishes, it is not, like the Sunday schools, under the immediate direction of any one Kirk-session, but is managed entirely by the general Board of Delegates from each session. In them is vested the exclusive power of regulating the branches to be taught, the general system of instruction, the books to be employed, the nomination of the master ; and, in a word, they possess the whole superintendence and control of this part of the establishment. In all these matters the ordinary medium of communication between the Directors and the Master is the SECRETARY.

Wherever a seminary is under the management of Directors, its success or failure may, in a great measure, depend upon the manner, in which they

discharge their important duties. By cold indifference, on the one hand, they may, to a certain degree, damp the ardour even of the most zealous teacher. By officious interference, on the other, they may paralyse his best exertions. If, for example, they give themselves no farther trouble about their seminary, than visiting it perhaps once a year on a public day, may not the indolent teacher become remiss, even the zealous wax cold? If they prescribe and obstinately adhere to a system of education or discipline, which, however beautiful it may appear to them in theory, is by him found practically inefficient,—what avail his best exertions? If they anxiously discourage all attempts on his part at improvement, upon no better ground, than that he cannot point his finger to the chapter and verse, where it is “so nominated” in the code of Lancaster or Bell, or some other equally orthodox authority, to which his superiors have thought proper most religiously to attach their faith—he must patiently submit to the mortification of seeing his seminary far outstript by those of others, perhaps much his inferiors, who are either left uncontrolled, or are at least placed under more judicious control. Or if, on the other hand, “carried about with every wind” of opinion, they readily admit, for the purpose of experiment, every crude suggestion, which may be made, either by any of their own number, or by others alike inexperienced in teaching; or recklessly adopt any particular part of a system, which as a whole has proved successful elsewhere, without viewing it in all its bearings, as con-

nected either with other arrangements, or with the peculiar circumstances of the institution,—what is naturally to be expected from such a mode of management? What, but inconstancy and perpetual vacillation, each upstart fancy of to-day expelling that of yesterday, and destined in its turn either to give place to that of to-morrow, or to be blended with it in an incongruous manner, resembling a species of the most ill-assorted, ill-compacted, mosaic.

There are few errors, against which Directors should be more on their guard, than that of fettering their teacher with too many and minute regulations. Having taken due pains to place a proper person in a situation so important and responsible, and traced out to him, if necessary, the outlines of the system, which they wish him to adopt, they should leave to himself to fill up the rest. Nor is it in their collective capacity only, that they should carefully abstain from all unnecessary interference. Little do themselves often know the chilling influence of a single heedless expression, by which they “just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.” The like caution is to a certain degree necessary in the conduct of principals, rectors, and other superiors towards their inferior teachers. But, perhaps, most of all is it essential in the conduct of parents, subscribers, &c. both towards the teachers, and towards those to whom has been confided the management of such institutions. In joint stock companies, indeed, for the purpose of education, as well as for every other purpose, no one can call in question the

*right* of the stockholders to investigate the mode, in which their concerns have been managed, and even formally to remonstrate with the directors on the subject of their administration. But this is a right, which should be most sparingly exercised, and only on pressing occasions. An indiscriminate exercise of it could not fail to be deeply injurious to the institution, and would tend to discountenance, among the proprietors themselves, *all* such interference, even on occasions when it is most strongly called for, and for which it should exclusively be reserved.

To the manner, in which the Directors of the Edinburgh Sessional School have discharged their duties, that institution has been deeply indebted, for its success and its reputation. At its first establishment, they naturally put it upon that system of mutual instruction, which then happened to be best known and understood in this part of the country ; but, at the same time, prudently stripping it of much which appeared most objectionable in its details. This original arrangement, however, they did not, like too many others, regard as “ a law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not ;” nor did they resolve to shut their eyes either to any defects, which should display themselves in their own system, or to any superior advantages, which they might discover in others. They, accordingly, with eagerness embraced the earliest opportunity of rendering themselves thoroughly acquainted with the various systems of monitorial education, as respectively exhibited in their best models. The result of this investigation, joined to the experience, which

they had themselves acquired, induced them to abandon many of their first arrangements, and to introduce others in their room. They at the same time, gave their teacher an opportunity of seeing the manner, in which those general principles, that now met with their approbation, had elsewhere been reduced into detail. But here happily they wisely stopt. They did not, by any unnecessary regulations, withhold from him ample scope for the exercise of his own discretion and experience, or impede the progress of farther improvement. They did not pertinaciously insist, that the method of instruction pursued in any other school should be rigidly adhered to in their own; nor did they, from blind reverence for any great name, or overweening attachment to their own preconceived opinions, view with jealous eye any deviation from a prescribed routine. On the contrary, they gave facility to every promising improvement proposed by the master, without any bigotted regard to the quarter, from which his suggestion might have been derived; they readily sanctioned, and even of themselves proposed, a change of books for this purpose; and in every respect anticipated the fondest wishes of those, who undertook to carry the improvements into effect. The consequence has been, that their seminary has attained a degree of success, which, though it does by no means justify the extravagant encomiums that have been bestowed upon it, undoubtedly never could have been attained under a system of management less judicious, less liberal, and enlightened.

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## CHAP. VI.

### DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MASTER.

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Simplex in docendo ; patiens laboris.—QUINTILIAN.

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IF it be true, as we have already stated, that, under a bad system of education, the exertions of the best teacher may be rendered comparatively of little avail, it is at least equally true on the other hand, that, on the qualifications of the teacher, the success or failure of the best system will chiefly depend. He must be the very life and soul of the system. If he be indolent, his monitors and pupils will be alike inactive ; if he be enthusiastic, they, to a certain degree, will participate in his energy. Nothing can be a greater mistake, than to suppose, that, under the monitorial system, the master may, for a single moment, be idle without injury to the school. If, during school hours, he be not incessantly, actively employed, his school must suffer in proportion, be the qualifications or learning of his monitors what they may. He ought seldom or

never to be found in his desk, but always on the floor among his pupils, and almost always in the act of teaching. It is quite erroneous to suppose, that it is the monitors alone whom he is to teach, and that, at all other times, the only duty which he has to perform, is the superintendence of general order. He ought on the contrary, to visit and to teach every class as its circumstances may demand; and, with regard to the inferior classes in particular, where every lesson is a new step, they ought never to be allowed to pass from one lesson to another, without undergoing a previous personal examination by himself, in order to determine, whether the class is fit to advance, and whether any of its individual scholars must be left behind in an inferior one.

In the choice of a master, the Directors of this institution are under no restrictions, and may therefore select any individual, who in their opinion, is best endowed with the necessary qualifications. On a vacancy in some other seminaries, and particularly in parish schools, it has become a common practice to give public notice, that "none who have any views of preferment in the church need apply for the situation." The wisdom of so sweeping an exclusion, whether with reference to the particular seminary, or to the general interests of education, may reasonably be doubted. Its leading object, we presume, is to protect the school from being exposed to too frequent a change of masters. We cannot help thinking, however, that great as this evil may be, the insurance against such a risk may



still be purchased at too high a rate. Of the candidates for parish schools, it will scarcely be denied, those in general are the best informed and best educated, who have been trained with a view to the church: and it does by no means appear to be either necessary or proper, to preclude the community from the services of one, who, to his personal attainments, joins acknowledged and transcendent zeal, abilities, and experience as a teacher, merely because he will not debar himself from all prospect of higher preferment, which by accident, at any future period of his life, may open up to him. How many in this situation have long continued the greatest blessing to parishes, that had the good sense not to spurn them away! How many are there at this hour, of the very best teachers, both in our burgh and our parish schools, whom such a proscription would have excluded! Their removal, from whatever cause, it is true, would be a source of deep regret to their neighbourhood; but this regret would be mingled with gratitude, both to the teachers themselves and to their patrons, for the benefit, which the families of the district had received, during the period of their valuable services. Were the principle of this exclusion carried to its full extent, we know not where it might stop. In the case of those schools, whose emoluments are but scanty, we may expect to see advertisements bearing that "none need apply who are *highly qualified* for the situation;" because it is not unnatural to suppose, that such will be looking out for higher promotion. The injurious tendency of such a sys-

tem of exclusion, as it regards the *general* interests of education, is not less obvious. Shut out from all hope of church preferment, the parish school-masters can hardly fail to loose caste in society. Unless means be taken to ameliorate their situation, (in which case, indeed, higher qualifications for it may be exacted,) their own education will be as scanty, and their opinions as narrow, as their prospects are limited. Nor does it appear that the interests either of religion or of secular knowledge would be promoted by any unnecessary separation of the two departments.

It is unnecessary to attempt to describe all the qualifications desirable in the master of a school. Suffice it to advert to one, which though naturally the most prominent, is too liable to be left in the back ground—we mean that of his being “*APT TO TEACH.*” In looking out for a teacher in any department of instruction, there is a strong tendency to pay almost exclusive attention to the candidate’s own attainments in knowledge, with little or no regard to his capacity of communicating the elements of that knowledge to those, who as yet are uninitiated. To ascertain *the former* qualification, a comparative trial is not unfrequently instituted; and if, in this ordeal (by no means always affording the most unexceptionable test even for its own purpose,) the candidate be successful, *the latter* qualification is taken for granted. Nothing, however, can be a greater mistake. It is very true, that a man cannot give to others what he has not him-

self; but it does by no means follow, that, because he himself possesses knowledge in great perfection, he must therefore proportionally be endowed with the faculty of communicating the rudiments of that knowledge to others. We know not whether to this faculty phrenologists have assigned any peculiar region of the brain, but we are persuaded that it is a talent of a peculiar kind, which even long practice does not always confer. In order to practise this art successfully, the teacher must secure the affections of his dullest pupil, must condescend to place himself in his situation, must feel his difficulties, and thus know the method, by which they are most likely to be surmounted. Now it is not every man of genius and of high acquirements, that can stoop so low. Perfect master of his own subject, he cannot make an allowance for an utter unacquaintance with it on the part of others; what he himself perhaps acquired with facility, he cannot, under any circumstances, imagine to be a matter of difficulty. All, accordingly, who do not readily follow him, or do not accomplish tasks which are above their strength, he sets down as so unconquerably lazy, or unconquerably dull, that he needs not give himself any farther trouble about them; forgetting that the fault may be in himself, and that the highest excellence of a teacher consists, not in making a few transcendent scholars, but in doing justice to all his pupils.\* We are far from saying

\* By *doing justice* to all his pupils, we do not of course mean, that the master should render all in the same class equally good

that the learned scholar and the able teacher may not combine in the same individual ; nor need we, in illustration of this, go beyond the present situation of the two great grammar schools of our own city, where a Carson and a Williams preside. Nor do we deny, that such a combination has a most decided advantage on its side, which it should be the earnest wish of directors to secure to their seminaries. The man of learning and information has constant stores at hand, which properly used, may be of the greatest service in illustrating even the rudiments of knowledge, as well as in forming a taste for its higher acquirements. But at the same time, wherever it comes to be a question whether superior scholarship, without aptitude for teaching, or aptitude for teaching with a moderate share of scholarship, should be preferred, there seems to be little room for hesitation.

Among other particulars which aptitude for teaching implies, we may mention the communication of any particular piece of instruction at the time, and in the manner in which it is most likely to arrest the attention of the pupil, and to make the most lasting impression upon his mind,—and a readiness

scholars. This is quite out of the question even in those schools like the Sessional, where the children are classified as nearly as possible according to their actual attainments ; and if, in such seminaries as the Edinburgh High School or the Edinburgh Academy, where the pupil's class is almost invariably determined by the length of time, during which he has been in the school, the boys at the head and foot of the class should be found very nearly equal to each other, there would, we conceive, be room to suspect, that justice had not been done to the former.

to suggest, or rather to draw forth from the learner himself familiar illustrations of every subject, adapted to his age, and to the other circumstances in which he is placed. The opportunity afforded for consulting all such circumstances in the pupil's condition, is certainly one of the superior advantages of *domestic* education, though counterbalanced (where the education is wholly and exclusively domestic,) by many great disadvantages. But we are by no means to imagine that a *public* teacher has no room for exercise of this important *tact*. Even in the largest schools, where education must of course be conducted in a more regular, and even somewhat mechanical method, not a day passes, which does not afford ample scope for its beneficial exercise, in consulting the capacities and inclinations not merely of a whole class, but even of individual scholars. The curiosity of a young person, as Locke has well observed, ought by no means unnecessarily "to be balked," and the teacher, who is persuaded of the truth of this philosopher's observation, that "a child will learn three times as much when he is in tune," as at any other time, is much more likely to put his pupils in tune, and to find them in it, than he who consults only his own inclination, or moves continually in the same unvaried round. A single rash rebuff or cold reply, given to a child at a moment when his curiosity is most ardent, may mar for life the most promising scholar.\*

\* The *tact*, which the Writer is now recommending, may perhaps be best illustrated by an incident of actual occurrence. He on

the occasion to which he alludes, happened to notice, that one of the best arithmeticians was not in his place. On looking round the room, he found him at the atlas with another scholar. The truth was, the boys had both solved the question proposed in arithmetic, and had gone to the map to settle a dispute they had about the course of some river, knowing well that they would be in their place, before all their companions were done with the question, which they had already solved, and a new one would be given out. On noticing this circumstance, the person, who was then master of the school, observed, "They are becoming *too keen* about rivers," and was disposed to chide the boys. Taking him aside, the Author answered, "It is this very *keenness*, which has made our school what it is, and we must beware how we blunt it." There was here, it was true, a breach of order, and one which if allowed to become a practice, would have been very prejudicial: still the Writer is persuaded, that in the particular circumstances, it would have been most inexpedient to have employed reproof, and for himself, he owns it to be an irregularity of a kind, which he never witnesses without secret delight.

## CHAP. VII.

## THE MONITORS AND THE MONITORIAL SYSTEM.

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Feels every distant limb its will obey,  
And instant own the all-preserving sway.

WALKER'S DEFENCE OF ORDER.

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NEXT to the nomination of the master, there is no circumstance, on which a school, instituted on the principle of mutual instruction, will so much depend for its success as the selection, which he makes of his MONITORS. This is a matter of much too great importance to be left to chance. Nor ought these officers to be appointed merely on account of seniority, or long experience in the system of the school. Even personal proficiency will by no means be always of itself a safe guide. The like observation applies here as in the case of the master himself: the scholar of quickest apprehension is sometimes far from being the best monitor.\* Due pains must also be taken in determining the class, to which each

\* Of the justice of this remark the school at present (1880) exhibits a peculiarly striking illustration. The most successful

monitor respectively is to be posted. One monitor will do much better for one class, and another for another. It will by no means do to assign the lowest class to the lowest monitor, and so progressively. In truth the younger classes in general require more patience, more perseverance, and, in a word, more teaching qualifications on the part of the monitor, than most of the others. The master, it is

monitor there at this moment is a boy of the name of Watt, who in this respect has astonished all his companions. At the time of his appointment he made little figure in his own class, being at once apparently slow, idle, and heedless ; and it was a particular exigency alone, that induced us to take him on trial as a monitor. Here he exhibited himself in quite a new character. The cold and listless scholar showed himself as a teacher all fire and animation, displaying a degree of energy, zeal, and tact beyond all his companions, and in himself peculiarly unexpected. At no one moment while employed in teaching has he ever been detected slumbering upon his post, while, on the other hand, when called upon to discharge the duty of an assistant in preserving order and procuring attention to the instructions of another, no one was ever more provokingly remiss. He possesses in an eminent degree the quality of rivetting the attention of all his pupils, and is distinguished for the pains which he takes in rendering his instructions easy and familiar, arising in all probability from the recollection of his own original slowness of apprehension. No class is ever so thoroughly drilled or so rapidly advanced as his, and wherever any other class has fallen behind, Watt is constantly employed to bring it up. The well known maxim, "*indoctus docendo*," &c. has to a very considerable extent been exemplified in him. Though still inferior as a pupil to some of his companions whom he far excels as a monitor, he, in consequence of the pains which he has taken to fit himself for the latter situation, has acquired an extent of information, a correctness and precision, which he would not otherwise have possessed ; while the ardour, which this employment called forth, cannot fail to have had important influence on his general character.



therefore obvious, ought carefully to avoid laying down, or at least divulging, any general rules, on the subject either of the nomination, or the appointment of his monitors. It should be distinctly understood through the school, that, in every such nomination, *all* circumstances must be taken into account,—that one may be rejected or removed from being a monitor, merely on account of his not possessing a turn for teaching, without calling in question either his own other attainments or his diligence,—and that, among the monitors themselves, the post of honour depends, not on the numerical order of the class intrusted to them, but entirely upon its state of discipline and improvement. These principles have been acted upon and fully understood in the Sessional School for several years past, and, during the whole period, we have never known a single instance of murmur, at the manner in which they have been carried into execution. In the arrangement of the monitors, indeed, much is left (not theoretically, or avowedly, but practically,) to their own choice, it being found that each in general knows the department for which he is best qualified, and that he discharges with greatest zeal the duties of that department, which has been the object of his own choice. This of course is much facilitated by the circumstance, already alluded to, of there being no particular place of honour among them, except the situation of head monitor, which infers a general superintendence of the others, and of course additional responsibility. The state of their respective classes, accordingly, is

among them the great and only object of their emulation, and according to that, and that alone, are the monitor prizes awarded.

This method of teaching a school through the medium of the scholars themselves, highly important as it is in the conduct of education, especially upon a large scale, is well known to be only of modern invention. In every age indeed, there have, perhaps, been instances of elder children occasionally instructing the younger in matters, which they had themselves been previously taught. But for Dr. Bell, towards the close of the eighteenth century, was reserved the honour of being the first to reduce this method into a regular system, to exemplify that system in his own practice, and to recommend it to the notice of the world. This highly valuable improvement, however, attracted far less attention than it justly merited, until it happily fell into other, we do not say either more judicious or abler hands. Joseph Lancaster, a quaker and dissenter from the Established Church, secured to the system (which he *originally* confessed he had in a great measure borrowed from Dr. Bell) a far greater notoriety and more general adoption, than either its inventor, or any other churchman, could in all probability have effected. As he of course did not teach in his school the doctrines of the national church, its success came to be viewed with a jealous eye by the friends of the establishment; some of whom, in their intemperate zeal, involved the man himself, and his meritorious exertions, with all that was good, as well as much that was decidedly bad.

in his method of instruction, and even the promotion of general education itself, in one sweeping and severe condemnation. This naturally produced an equally strong re-action. Party-spirit, so often the source of good, as well as of evil to a people, was aroused. Lancaster and his school, that might in other circumstances have attracted but little attention, now became the subjects of glowing panegyric. Even its most striking faults were warmly eulogized as the highest perfections. Amid this fierce conflict of contending factions, the wise, the impartial, and the benevolent, of every denomination, soon discerned the real benefits of the system, and its infinite value in the dissemination of knowledge; and, with their venerable and patriotic Sovereign\* at their head, looked forward with exultation to the time, when there should not be a subject of these realms unable to read his Bible. It was now evident, that the torrent could no longer be stemmed; and the only question (one undoubtedly of importance) came to be, in what channel it should be made to flow. On the one hand, many who had hitherto been lukewarm in the cause of general education, or openly opposed to it, were now fired with sudden zeal for the promotion of national schools; while many, on the other hand, who cared little about that religious and moral reformation, which it is the great object of education to accomplish, were, in consequence, easily induced to contribute their aid, in opposition, as they were told, to bigotry and

\* George III.

intolerance. Many, who had hitherto sneered at the new system, or, perhaps,

——“without sneering made the rest to sneer,”

were now eager to vindicate the just claims of its real inventor; while others no less zealously supported the present pretensions of his rival, to an extent, which he himself had formerly, and ought still to have disclaimed. Hence National and Lancastrian schools rose side by side in many a town, village, and hamlet, where the education of the poor had hitherto been unable to find an abode. Happy would it be, if some kindred zeal (even though not untinctured with faction) should arise, to infuse into these institutions, and into all other institutions for education, whether of a more ancient or more modern date, a portion of that enlivening spirit, which does not always accompany the outward forms of instruction; and to dissipate the delusion, that, in furnishing the shell, we are at the same time necessarily providing the kernel.

The monitorial system is certainly of greatest service, and is indeed absolutely essential, in those large establishments, where it becomes necessary to put some hundreds of children under the superintendence of one master. If all of these should remain unemployed, until it come to their own turn, or even to the turn of their own class, to repeat a lesson, it is obvious what a miserable waste of time must be the necessary consequence; whereas, according to this system, when rightly conducted, all

are incessantly busy, and not a single moment is lost by any one individual. To say that a boy makes a better teacher than a man, would be manifestly absurd. At the same time, we have no hesitation in giving it as our opinion, that in *some* respects, independently of the question of expense, the monitorial system has decided advantages over any, which could be conducted by the same number of adult ushers, especially where these have not all been previously trained to the system which they are to teach. In the first place, the young monitors are more pliant and flexible, and thus more easily moulded by the master to his own views, so that he can at all times maintain, throughout the whole even of the most extensive seminary, nearly as perfect a unity of system, and as nice an accommodation of each class to the others, as if he himself were every moment personally occupied in each, and continually conducted the education of every individual scholar, from its commencement to its close. Every the slightest instance, too, of neglect or deviation from instructions, can be noticed and censured in the case of the monitor with the most perfect freedom ; and wherever he is on any account found not to answer the purpose, for which he was taken on trial, he may in a moment be removed to another department, or even altogether from the situation of monitor, without exciting any stir, or, perhaps, the slightest feeling of affront. But, where each class is put under the management of an usher, the very opposite of all this takes place. He is disposed much more to follow his own inclination ; he

cannot be censured with the same freedom, nor be so easily removed; nor, if he were removed, could his place be so readily supplied. Hence the unity of system is in a great measure destroyed, the progress of each class will in a much greater degree depend on the qualifications of its respective teacher, and the success of the school, as a whole, will rest much more on their joint qualifications, and be less ensured by the appointment of one able master, than when it is placed under the tuition of monitors.

In the second place, the monitors are, in general, especially in minor matters, (by which we mean those that are too generally accounted such,) more active and alert than ushers, make much better *fags*, and, as has often been observed, take a pleasure and a pride in performing duties, which the others are too apt to regard as an excessive bore and a degradation.\* Nothing in the Sessional School has more astonished a stranger, than the zeal, the alertness, the pains, and, we may add, the ability displayed by the monitors. No stronger proof, indeed, can be given of their teaching qualifications, than the eagerness, with which they are laid hold of by parents in the higher walks of life, for the domestic education of their own families. Their very age, if it is in some respects undoubtedly a disadvantage, is

\* "How can any one expect us to do the drudgery of these boys?" is an unintentional compliment, which we believe has not unfrequently been paid to the monitorial system, by some of its strongest opponents.

in others an advantage for this purpose. They on the one hand, can more easily sympathise with the difficulties of their pupil, while he, on the other hand, with a greater prospect of success, strives to emulate his young teacher. The Writer hesitates not to acknowledge, that, in introducing improvements into the school, he has again and again found his object to be far more effectually and rapidly accomplished, by putting it into the hands of a skilful monitor, whom he had made acquainted with his views, than by attempting to instruct the class for the first time in person. As an additional proof of the facility, which our monitors have acquired, in communicating as well as receiving instruction, we may, perhaps, be pardoned for relating the following recent incident. A learned mathematician came to the school for the purpose of exhibiting what he suggested as an improvement in the practice of one of the rules of arithmetic. The Author, being unable sufficiently to comprehend the explanation given him, called in the assistance of one of the best monitors, who came at length thoroughly to understand the proposed method, but not until it had been explained to him by its inventor, four or five times over. This passed in the Directors' room. On the boy's return to the school-room, he so distinctly explained to one of his fellow monitors the method, which had been shown to him, that, from this explanation *once* given, the other boy (though much his inferior in this department), was able himself at once to perform the operation ;

which the Writer himself also was now for the first time able to comprehend.

We have said, that, in very large schools, under the superintendence of one master, this method of instruction is absolutely essential. It is not, however, in these alone that it is useful, we would almost add necessary. In many schools, though by no means very extensive, children of very different ages, of very different grades in point of attainment, and engaged in very different branches of education, are necessarily confided to the superintendence of one master. Thus the parish schools of Scotland not unfrequently comprehend, at the same moment, within their walls, pupils of all ages from five perhaps to sixteen, or even upwards,—classes learning the vernacular tongue in every stage of progress, from ABC to the reading of Milton, and acquiring the nicest and most metaphysical rules of its grammar—others learning the Latin tongue in every stage, from its alphabet to the reading of Horace and Virgil, and acquiring all the subtleties of that language,—others, in like manner, learning Greek in various stages,—others, perhaps, French,—others writing,—others arithmetic and book-keeping in all their stages,—others geography,—others geometry, &c.—others religious instruction. And all this is attempted to be accomplished, in most cases, by one master, without any assistance at all, and in others, with the aid only of a single usher. In all such cases it must be quite evident, that the larger proportion of those assembled in the school must always be



comparatively idle. While the master for example, is employed in teaching one or two boys the alphabet, what are all the rest about? Nothing! or doing what is far worse than nothing, acquiring the most indolent and pernicious habits: for rarely indeed, every one must acknowledge, is any good done by children, especially by younger children, when left to themselves in their seats at school. That this stands in need of remedy, we think, can hardly be denied, particularly by those teachers, who assign as a reason for not rendering their method of instruction more intellectual, that the multiplicity of their present occupations leaves them little enough time for teaching the children to read, without being also called upon to make them understand what they read. Now, we know no remedy, either more simple, more cheap, or efficacious, than that of enabling the pupils to teach others, in place of remaining idle, during the necessary interval between the master's personal examinations.

The field, which appears to us the most unpromising for the use of monitors, is fortunately the very one in which their employment is least necessary. We allude to classes, such as those which compose the two great grammar schools of this city, where the children committed to one master are all in the same stage of their education. Even into this department, Mr. Pillans, (whose ability as a teacher, and zeal in the cause of education, stand in need of no encomium of ours,) beneficially introduced the monitorial system to a certain extent; and his practice has been with similar advantage followed

by other teachers in both these establishments. It must be quite obvious, that, where a task has been assigned to be committed to memory, such as rules of grammar, or a vocabulary, or a certain number of lines of a poet, there is no such expeditious method of ascertaining, whether the task has been performed by the whole class, consisting perhaps of considerably above a hundred boys, as that of subdividing the school, and requiring the higher scholars, who have themselves been previously heard, to hear the lower boys repeat their lessons. Still we are inclined to think,—and in this opinion we are confirmed by very able teachers, who zealously practise this method,—that, especially in younger classes, the system cannot be rendered so extensively beneficial, as in those establishments, where the same master has under his charge pupils of all ages, and in every stage of their education. In the latter case, where the system is rightly conducted, the monitors not only *hear* but *teach*. They explain, they exemplify, they illustrate, in a manner which we know has frequently excited the astonishment of strangers, and which we are aware cannot be expected from those, who are less acquainted with the general bearings, and have only that morning been, for the first time, themselves instructed in the lesson, which they are required to teach. In matters of translation, and the like, there is a peculiar danger in carrying this practice to excess in such classes as we have been describing. In such cases, it is evident, that there may be many more than one translation equally good, and, (however opposite may be the general practice,) a judicious

teacher will always encourage rather than discountenance such a variety of translation. This, however, a very young monitor can by no means do, and will, in all probability, exact an undeviating adherence to the master's translation, which surely is in itself an evil. We have been the more anxious to notice the distinction, which is here pointed out, in order that we may do justice both to the general system, and also to those admirable teachers, who practise it only to that more limited extent, which the circumstances of their own situation admit. Those, who have known the system only as it can be exhibited in such situations, must have a very inadequate conception of its real value. Those, on the other hand, who have witnessed its operation on a greater scale, and murmur that it is not rendered equally beneficial elsewhere, may be guilty of the greatest injustice. We beg leave also to repeat, that in the situations of which we are now speaking, the monitorial system, as it is less capable of being carried into full operation, so its operation is, at the same time, far less requisite. Even in a *large* class, composed entirely of children in the same period of their studies, if the master be at all qualified for his situation, it is in his power, by darting now to the top, now to the bottom, now to the middle of the class, to keep the attention of the whole constantly awake ; which, of course, is quite impracticable in those schools, where different children are employed at the same time in different studies.

Every monitor in the Sessional School is provid-

ed with an ASSISTANT, whose duty it is to preserve order and attention in the class, while he himself is occupied in teaching. The advantage of such an officer must be sufficiently obvious. In some schools, excellent in every other respect, a practice prevails, which in our opinion cannot be too much condemned, of encouraging the children to become general informers against each other, and giving them an interest in doing so, by putting the informer in the delinquent's place, if the latter be previously superior in the class. This mode of informing is never practised in the Sessional School except by a novice, and from the reception which it encounters, not merely from the master, but from his fellow scholars, who never fail to banish their officious companion from their company for a season, is in no great danger of being repeated. But the *assistant*, who, in giving information, does no more than his duty, secures the approbation alike of his teacher and his fellows. It is, accordingly, no unusual thing to see a boy playing at the door of the school with the individual, who, the very moment before, had, in discharge of duty, been the occasion of his censure or punishment.

It is the duty of the monitors and their assistants to take charge of the books, slates, pencils, &c. of their respective classes, all of which are the common property of the school, and are never allowed to be carried out of it. It also lies with the monitors to keep the registers of attendance of their respective classes. It is easy to conceive how well calculated

such practices are, to teach them habits of regularity, order, and business.

We are not unaware of the prejudices, that exist in the minds of parents, on the subject of the monitorial system, and are clearly of opinion, that, like all other prejudices, these should be tenderly handled. It will not do for the master or directors, who introduce this system, to assume a high tone, and to say, that *they know* that its introduction is for the good of the school, and that this is enough. They must be at pains to make those who are interested know it also. *At first*, we think, they should only employ boys in what we have termed hearing of tasks, such as spelling and the like, and in no other species of teaching. Till the monitors, indeed, be themselves properly trained, they cannot with advantage be employed to any other purpose. And care should be particularly taken to show the parents, that the master labours among all their children as assiduously as before ; that they are employed in the mutual instruction of each other, only at those intervals, when they would otherwise have been idle ; and that much saving of time is thus obtained. We would also, before concluding this chapter, again warn our readers against the erroneous supposition, that the monitorial system (great as its advantages are) is calculated to do every thing, and remind them, that it is not to this system alone, the Sessional School owes its present reputation, but to the activity of its teachers, and the pains which have been bestowed in rendering the education of the pupils rational and substantial.

## CHAP. VIII.

## ON CLASSIFICATION.

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Cum pueros in classes distribuerant, ordinem dicendi secundum vires ingenii dabant.—QUINTILIAN.

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ON the subject of CLASSIFICATION, a question has arisen between the two great sects, who promote the system of mutual instruction, relative to *the size of the classes* best adapted to that system. On the one hand, the disciples of Bell maintain, that *large* classes are to be preferred, and that, where circumstances admit, each ought to contain no fewer than 36. On the other hand, Lancaster's disciples contend, that the classes ought always to be *small*, and should on no occasion exceed 9. This subject, though it may not improbably on its first mention, remind our readers of the famous Big-endian and Little-endian controversy, is by no means without importance, but on the contrary appears to merit as much attention as any of the other details of external arrangement. The advantages

of the large class system seem to be, that it excites superior emulation, provides a sufficient supply of fit monitors, and occasions far less noise through the school. The advantage of the other system appears to us to consist, in each individual scholar being personally called upon to bear his part more frequently, in what has been termed *ludus literarius*. The small class system was that first tried in the Sessional School; but, in consequence of the inconveniences which were experienced, joined to the result of a personal and narrow inspection, by the Secretary, of both methods, in the highest state of perfection, to which they had then respectively attained, the Directors, (as we formerly hinted), judged it expedient to resort to the other; a resolution, which they have never since found cause to regret. The average number of pupils at present in each class of the Sessional School is about 30

For ourselves we would, *ceteris paribus*, much rather teach a class of 30 or 36, than one of 9 or 10. The former has far more of that spirit and animation, which characterizes public education, the latter approaches too nearly to the coldness and dulness of private or family tuition. Again, one of the most unpleasing concomitants of the monitorial system, under any method of administration, is the noise, (we mean the noise of business), which it necessarily occasions. Now, great as this noise undoubtedly is in the Sessional School, even as at present constituted, every one must at once perceive how tremendously it would be increased, if each of the present classes were subdivided into three or

four: more especially if all of them were to be on the floor *reading* at the same time, according to the Lancasterian fashion, in place of only half being at any one time so employed, as with us is the present practice. But our principal objection to the small class system is the difficulty of procuring a sufficient supply of fit monitors to conduct that system. In the Sessional School, nothing certainly has excited higher admiration, or contributed more to its success, than the excellence of its monitors. This, it may well be believed, has been the result of anxious selection, as well as careful training, and difficulty enough has been frequently experienced, to procure a sufficiency of such monitors, as would there be accounted worthy to be intrusted with a class. But, if any regulation were now made, requiring the number to be tripled or quadrupled, the master must bid adieu to all such power of selection, and must be content to take many, whom, under existing circumstances, he should never have dreamt of placing in such a situation of trust. The school might indeed, in this case, go on as well as many others upon a similar system; but it would be in vain to look for a continuance of its present success and reputation.

We have sometimes heard stated, as an objection to the large class system, the increased exertion, which is supposed to be necessary, in consequence of the noise of the school, to make the children be heard at the more remote parts of the class. This objection we conceive to be founded in misapprehension. When the increased noise,



arising from the vast multiplication of voices under the small class system, is properly taken into account, we suspect that it will be found, that the exertion of the pupil must be *at least* as great under this method as the other. We have in fact before writing this Account, put the matter to the test of repeated and careful experiment, and have found the advantage in this respect to be much in favour of the large classes. We have also been told by more than one of our own pupils, who had previously been trained under the other system, that they heard far better in our school than in the other.

Still, however, we beg it may be distinctly understood, that we consider this, like every other matter of the kind, a question of *circumstances*, and we should think it very absurd to lay down any un-deviating rule upon the subject. If, for example, a certain number of children are already quite able to say the alphabet, what could be more ridiculous than to contend, that these shall not be formed into a class, because their number does not yet amount to 30? So also in a school not very numerous, but composed of pupils of various ages and stages of advancement, it would be no less absurd to unite very different grades for the purpose of swelling the class to this number. Regard ought also to be paid to the object, for which the classification is required. The opinion, which we have now ventured to give upon this subject, relates to the case of a large school, composed of children in different stages of progress, and where almost the whole teaching is to be constantly carried on in

these classes by the monitors, under the superintendence and review of the master. But, with regard to schools such as those adverted to in the preceding chapter, where all the children committed to one master are in the same stage of their progress,—are all generally taught together as one class by the master,—and are only occasionally thrown into divisions under the higher pupils, for the temporary purpose of ascertaining, whether they have performed a particular task, and of reporting to him the defaulters,—a very different opinion may well be entertained. Here it is evident that a wide field of emulation is left to the children when united, which they could never enjoy if their whole teaching were in the small divisions. The great object of the subdivision in this case is expedition; and if, by making this subdivision more minute, the noise is undoubtedly increased, it is also in such circumstances the sooner at an end, and from its being but of short duration, may more easily be endured. For such a temporary and less important purpose, too, there does not exist the same necessity, as in the former case, for an anxious selection of monitors; who accordingly for this object, may be taken, (and we believe generally are taken,) from the boys, who for the time happen to be at the top of the class, without any particular regard to their qualifications for teaching. They, too, are set over the subdivisions just in the order of their own position in the general class, without any necessity of making the inquiry, formerly shown to be so essential in other circumstances, relative to the particular section to

which each should be posted. Before quitting this branch of our subject, we would further remark, that, in the case of schools consisting of pupils in different stages, it is highly desirable, for a reason which will be better understood from perusing the sequel of this chapter, that such an arrangement of classes should be made, as not to occasion too wide and too difficult a transition from one to another.

In determining the class, to which any individual pupil should either be originally posted or subsequently removed, the natural criterion obviously is neither his age, nor the length of time he has been under tuition, but his actual proficiency. When a child, accordingly, is introduced into the Sessional School, trial is first made of his qualifications, in order to determine in which class he should be placed. This is sometimes no easy matter to decide, and, we doubt not, the decision has, in the very threshold, given umbrage to many a parent. “My *ladie*,” we are not unfrequently told, “was in the *boonmost* class at his last school; he has *lang* been oot o’ the Bible and was in the ‘Beauties;’ he can say *a’ the questions*; and he was through *a’ the book in the coonting*.” Notwithstanding this profession, the alleged proficient is sometimes found quite incapable of reading our most simple and introductory book; of understanding a single syllable of his catechism, or of performing the most elementary operation of arithmetic. He is accordingly of course placed in the class, where he is most likely to receive improvement, without regard to his former high pretensions. But his continu-

ance in this class depends entirely upon his subsequent progress. If it be found, that he so far outstrips all his companions, as to stand continually at the top, without much exertion on his own part, it is high time that he should be promoted to a superior one, where he may find his level, and have all his energies called forth into exertion. If, on the other hand, it turn out that he is constantly at the bottom of the class, in a hopeless state of inability to compete with his present class-fellows, it may prove, and in the Sessional School has very frequently in such a case proved, of infinite advantage, to remove him to a lower class, where he may be better able to maintain his ground. We have sometimes found children in the latter situation, who, chagrined at not being able to keep up with the class in which they happened to be, of themselves requested to be put into a lower. And not unfrequently those, who had been so put back, have been able ere long to overtake their former comrades, and to enjoy with them the benefit of a more equal competition; whereas, had they been doomed all along to retain their original situation, they would undoubtedly have lost all heart, and, as scholars, have been ruined for life. There are some children extremely slow in laying the foundation of any branch of education, who, when it has once been laid, are no less alert than any of their companions, in rearing the superstructure. Such children require to be kept a much longer time in the elements, than those of more quick apprehension. Now it must be evident, that were both constantly

retained in the same class, either the latter must injuriously be kept back on account of the former ; or else the former must be dragged forward blind-fold, and totally ignorant of all that is going on, through the rest of the course.

In seminaries where various branches are taught, there should be a distinct classification for each department of study. Thus there should be one set of classes for reading, another for arithmetic, another for geography. It often happens, that the same child will make very different progress in different branches. Thus there is at present, in the Sessional School, a boy who has shot far a-head of all his original class-fellows in reading, but has fallen far short of them in arithmetic. In the former department, therefore, he is in the highest class, while in the latter he is in a much inferior one. At one period of the institution, reading and arithmetic were taught in the same classes, probably from a notion, that time would be lost in shifting the school from one set of classes to the other. The truth is, however, that the reading classes are now resolved into the arithmetic, and *vice versa*, in about half a minute. The appendages of reading, (such as explaining, spelling, and grammar,) are all taught in the reading classes.

The mode of arranging the individuals in each class, will form part of the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAP. IX.

## ON EMULATION, PLACES AND PRIZES.

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————— Keep then the path :  
 For emulation hath a thousand sons,  
 That, one by one, pursue. If you give way,  
 Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,—  
 Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,  
 And leave you hindmost.—SHAKESPEARE.

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IN the Sessional School, as in most other schools in this country, the individuals who compose each class, take precedence amongst each other, according to the manner in which they perform their various tasks. When any scholar has committed a blunder, the one immediately next him in the class is at liberty forthwith to correct it, being liable at the same time to be put down himself, if, in so doing, he fall into a mistake. When the next boy does not correct the error, then it becomes the duty of the monitor to point to each below him *seriatim*, and the first who gives a correct answer, is put over all the rest. In taking his place, he passes along the front of the line as in the Madras system :

when a child is put down, on the contrary, he passes along the rear. Except in the case of arithmetic, the practice with regard to which shall be noticed in its proper place, no child but the one next *him*, whose turn it was to have answered, is allowed to correct, till he is pointed to by the monitor. When children are allowed to bawl out together, not only intolerable noise is the necessary consequence, but likewise much confusion and altercation; and the teacher can by no means easily discern the real attainments of each individual.

By some, indeed, we are aware, emulation itself, the fundamental principle of all this arrangement, has been loudly condemned, as one which is utterly malignant and diabolical, and ought not only to be banished from every seminary of education, but entirely extirpated from the human soul. The opponents of the exercise of this principle may now be divided into two classes; those, who oppose it upon moral grounds, and as contrary to the true dignity of man; and those, who oppose it as contrary to the genuine spirit of Christianity or evangelism. The former contend, that the student should require no other stimulus, than the pure and unmingled love of knowledge and of duty; and that emulation is a base alloy, which at the same time genders envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. The opinions of the latter, who contend that this principle is not only immoral, but peculiarly unchristian and unevangelical, are, we presume, to be gathered from a Letter lately published, addressed by the Rev. Cesar Malan of Geneva, to Mr Campbell of

Carbrook, in which, according to Mr. Campbell, "Mr. Malan seems to have set this question at rest!!" From the high pretensions, with which this Letter has thus been ushered into the world, and the importance which is justly attached to every objection alleged to be founded on religious principles, we may perhaps be pardoned, for paying more attention to this performance, than its own intrinsic merits may seem to warrant; and for transcribing one of those scenes, which, we presume, are understood "to have set this question at rest," and are said to have occurred in a seminary, which its teacher, in our opinion, somewhat presumptuously, we had almost said profanely, hesitates not to pronounce an **EVANGELICAL THEOCRACY!!!**

On occasion of a visit to this seminary by a royal chaplain, Mr. Malan says, "This pious and excellent man came to me, evidently much affected, and with tears in his eyes, 'Oh! it is most admirable,' he exclaimed with emotion, 'it is truly most astonishing, and all to the glory of God. I could never have imagined it, and I am happy to have seen and heard it myself.' 'What has happened?' said I. 'I first went,' he replied, 'to that dear little child, who is the lowest in the school, [query, how comes there to be a lowest and a highest?] and I said to him even with an appearance of harshness and severity, 'So you are the lowest, my child.' 'Yes, Sir,' he replied with candour and modesty. 'And are you not ashamed?' added I in the same tone. 'Sir,' said this poor child with wonderful calmness, 'I as-



“sure you that it is not my fault : I do all that is  
“at present in my power ; but God has not yet  
“given me a good memory.’ I could do nothing  
“but silently embrace him, [had this embrace no  
“tendency to excite emulation ?] for he had melted  
“my heart. Upon leaving the amiable boy who was  
“lowest, I went to the boy at the top of the class,  
“and said to him, ‘ Well, my friend, you occupy  
“the highest place. It is a post of honour and  
“glory : I congratulate you on your attainment.’  
“Upon this the modest youth fixed his eyes upon  
“the ground, and said *with an air of embarrass-*  
“*ment*, ‘ Sir, I am not entitled to any praise ; all  
“the glory belongs to God : and, if I relaxed my  
“efforts, I should sin against him.’ ” After telling  
us, that “these answers were certainly most satis-  
“factory,” the Reverend Gentleman proceeds to de-  
tail another scene, in which all the boys at once  
threw up the medals, which they had formerly ob-  
tained, (and no wonder, seeing they were no longer  
regarded as marks of honour by him who conferred  
them) assigning as their reason, “it is the glory of  
“God that we are anxious to obtain.” What a  
contrast, we readily acknowledge, do such scenes as  
these present to the more simple and natural ones, of  
which alone Market Street can boast ! But, to the  
following incident, our own seminary, with all its  
*odious* emulation, *can* contribute innumerable paral-  
lels. “I witnessed in my school, what is rarely to  
“be met with in colleges conducted on worldly prin-  
“ciples, namely, during the hours of recreation, a  
“boy who was farther advanced, retiring to a cor-

“ner of the school, or of the play-ground, and patiently and kindly teaching one or two others, who had not made such progress.”

For ourselves we very much incline to the opinion that “a cook might as well resolve to make bread without fermentation, as a pedagogue to carry on school without emulation : it must be a sad doughy lump without this vivifying principle.”\* What might be the state of this question, if man, in his present imperfect condition, and particularly in the stage of childhood, stood in need of no additional incentive to the pursuit of knowledge or the practice of virtue, than the pure love of either,—it is very unnecessary to inquire. Surely no one will contend, that this is now his actual condition. And, in such circumstances, can it be wise in him to deny either to himself, or to those intrusted to his charge, the aid of any of those additional *stimuli*, which Providence in mercy proffers to supply this natural imperfection? Now, which of those incentives is more noble or animating, than the ardent desire implanted in our bosom of rising superior to our fellows? How many slumbering faculties has not this living principle roused into exertion! To how many days of toil and waking nights—to how many splendid discoveries and inventions—to how many deeds of virtue and exploits of heroism—to how much individual happiness and social improvement, has it not given birth! In place of being a base and sordid passion, is it not one which burns brightest in the

\* Edinburgh Review, xliv. p. 54.

noblest and most generous souls? Men may theoretically speak and write against it,\* but he, and he only, who is incapable of excellence, will ever refuse its aid. By any attempt to suppress it, we may turn it into a less pure channel than that in which Nature intended it to flow; but we can never entirely arrest its course. We are disposed entirely to rely on the truth of the statements which Mr. Malan has given, and on the *sincerity* of the inferences which he has himself drawn from them. But will any man, except Mr. Malan himself, and his correspondent, believe, that this principle has been banished from the school at Geneva? Nay, he himself speaks of an “evangelical emulation;” and we read, as has been already stated, of higher and lower boys. We believe there is scarcely an individual, that has read this Reverend Gentleman’s statement, on whose mind it has not left the same impression as upon our own—that there is in that school no want of emulation: not indeed that noble and generous principle, which we have been attempting to advocate, but one of the basest and most degrading kind, which it is unnecessary to characterize.

With regard to the feelings of envy, hatred, &c.

\* It is remarkable that Cowper, who in his “Tirocinium,” inveighs so strongly against emulation, in his “Task” evidently laments its decay along with the relaxation of discipline in our great public seminaries.

Discipline at length,  
O’erlooked and unemployed, fell sick and died:  
Then study languished, *Emulation slept*,  
And virtue fled.

which are said to be gendered by the exercise of emulation, we are far from denying, that this principle, like every other, is liable to abuse, and may, under improper management, produce the effects ascribed to it. But we can, from experience, with confidence pronounce, that these are not its necessary fruits. Even in the very moment of the most ardent competition, it has been our pleasure to witness, times without number, acts of the most generous and disinterested nature. Some of these, which had escaped our own observation, or been treated as matters of daily occurrence, have not failed to attract and draw forth the admiration of strangers. Who, too, are the fondest and most inseparable companions at play hours, but those, who, in their hours of business, most strenuously resist each other's pretensions? Such a spectacle may excite, in the breast of the theoretical speculator, the like feelings of wonder, that arise to the clown, on seeing the friendly intercourse of two barristers, who, but the moment before, appeared to him to have contracted a deadly quarrel. But it is familiar to all who have had the happiness to be educated at a well regulated school. To many such we may appeal, whether, in those who struggled hard to tear the laurels from their own youthful brows, they have not found their warmest and their steadiest friends through life :—

Their early friends, friends of their evil day ;  
Friends in their mirth, friends in their misery too ;  
Friends given by God in mercy and in love ;  
Their counsellors, their comforters, and guides ;  
Their joy in grief, their second bliss in joy ;

Companions of their young desires ; in doubt  
Their oracles : their wings in high pursuit.\*

All this, however, we confess, must go for nothing, if it be true, as is alleged, that the voice of Scripture utterly condemns the principle. But where is it that such condemnation has been pronounced? Mr. Malan's correspondent, indeed, our friend Mr. Campbell, sweepingly tells us, that "the Apostle Paul expressly proscribed emulation "as one of the works of the flesh." But if the Apostle, in the passage referred to is to be considered as proscribing under the word "emulation" all generous rivalry, as well may he be supposed to have condemned, under the word "wrath," in the same passage, all just and virtuous indignation, and under the term "variance," all difference in sentiment, however honest and sincere. Nor, assuredly, is it in the *practice* of the great Apostle, that we shall find any proscription of this principle. No man knew better than he its predominance over the human soul, or ever wielded it more powerfully towards the accomplishment of his own important ends. He tells us himself the use, which he made of it, in his attempt to convert and to save his own countrymen, by holding out to them the superior privileges, which the Gentiles, whom they despised, were now earning to themselves. With an evident reference to a passage in one of their Prophets, recently quoted by him, which contains the following remarkable

\* Pollok.

expression recognising the same principle, "I will  
 "provoke you to jealousy by them which are no  
 "people;" the Apostle proceeds,\* "I say then,  
 "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God  
 "forbid! But rather through their fall salvation is  
 "come unto the Gentiles, *for to provoke them to*  
 "*jealousy.* For I speak to you, Gentiles, inas-  
 "much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I mag-  
 "nify mine office; if by any means *I may provoke*  
 "*to emulation* them which are my flesh, and  
 "might save some of them." Nor can any thing  
 exceed the skill, with which he employs the like  
 principle, in the management of his various churches.  
 To the Macedonians he boasts of the forwardness  
 of the church at Corinth to contribute for the saints;  
 while, to the latter, he is careful to communicate  
 this boast, in order that they may show themselves  
 worthy of it. "I know," says he to the Corinth-  
 ians,† "the forwardness of your mind, for which I  
 "boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia  
 "was ready a year ago: and your faith hath pro-  
 "voked very many. Yet have I sent the brethren,  
 "lest our boasting of you should be vain in this  
 "behalf; that, as I have said, ye may be ready:  
 "lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me,  
 "and find you unprepared, we, that we say not *ye*,  
 "*should be ashamed* in this same confident boast-  
 "ing." What a contrast does tact like this, found-  
 ed on a thorough knowledge of human nature, ex-

\* Rom. xi. 11.

† 2 Cor. i. 2.

hibit, to the visionary schemes, which are our present object of consideration.

We would also, from experience, as well as from the reason of the thing, anxiously impress upon all engaged in the education of youth the deep importance of one species of emulation, which is free from some at least of the objections, that have been made to the other. We mean that eager desire to rival and surpass our former selves, so well pourtrayed by the poet\* in the following lines :

A noble emulation heats your breast,  
And your own fame now robs you of your rest ;  
Good actions still must be maintained with good,  
As bodies nourished with resembling food.

This species of emulation is attended with the additional advantage, that it may be brought into operation in private and individual, as well as public education,—in the case of him, who, having risen superior to all his former companions, has no rivals left him to surpass, and of him, who despairs of rivalling those, with whom he is associated. To an ingenuous soul what can be a stronger excitement to exertion, than bringing to his recollection his former achievements, and reminding him, if he begin to relax,

————— *quidquid vita meliore parasti*  
*Ponendum aequo animo.*

But, above all, it ought to be a leading principle

\* Dryden.

in education, to mark every the slightest improvement on the part of those, from whom little had been expected, with no less approbation, than the more rapid strides of those, on whom nature or previous education had conferred greater advantages. The benefits, arising from the exercise of such a principle, have been amply experienced in the Sessional School. Under its influence we have had the happiness to behold some, who had originally been mistaken for dunces, before leaving the school, assume a very different character. Out of many we may be pardoned for selecting, for the encouragement of others, one instance, which occurred at the Sunday School in Market Street. The lad, to whom we now refer, was put to that seminary by the master with whom he wrought, at the age of fifteen. He had previously received the education, which had hitherto been in this country generally bestowed upon those of his rank in life ; that is to say, he had been taught to read, write, and cipher, and to repeat the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. No pains had been bestowed to make him understand what he either read or repeated. He appeared uncommonly dull and stupid, and withal provokingly listless and indolent. At home, according to his own account, his master's service allowed him no time to do any thing else. His temper, moreover, seemed as sullen, as his faculties were to all appearance obtuse, and his habits inactive ; and, in a word, he at that time exhibited, in the estimation of all about the school, a perfect



pattern of what his companions would call a *sumph*.\* In this state he continued for a very considerable time after his admission; and under such circumstances, it cannot appear surprising, that he should have been represented by us to his master as one of our most unpromising subjects. Still, however, his teachers never suffered themselves to relax their exertions; and, at length, we thought we perceived some small symptoms of amendment in our pupil. These incipient exertions, weak as they might perhaps have appeared to a stranger, were not allowed to pass unnoticed or uncommended. He now showed himself not insensible to praise, and, from that time, evidently appeared better pleased with himself, and with all around him,—took a deeper interest in what he was taught, and, by his answers, showed that he every week understood it better,—found at length that he had no want either of leisure or ability to do more at home, than almost any of his companions,—and is in short at this moment one of the very best scholars and greatest ornaments of a school, to which he is no less warmly attached, than his teachers are to him. He is to all appearance infinitely improved at once as a religious, a moral, and an intellectual being, and may, we think, be safely ranked among those “who,” to borrow the language of a late highly respected divine of our established church,† “in learning the things of

\* An expressive Scotch word, denoting a *soft, sulky, lazy fellow*.

† Dr. Finlayson.

“God, have their faculties exercised, their taste  
“formed, and their powers of judging and reason-  
“ing, even concerning earthly matters, gradually  
“strengthened and improved.”

Nearly akin to the subject of Places is that of PRIZES, the former, in truth, being obviously a branch of the latter. Those who object to places must, of course, upon the same grounds, object to prizes: and those, on the other hand, it might naturally be imagined, who approve of places, can have no objection to *other prizes*, except perhaps on the ground of economy, or as being unnecessary. The latter, however, is not strictly true. There are persons, we believe, whose opinion is well entitled to the greatest weight in matters of education, zealous advocates for emulation and preferment by means of places, who still strongly contend against the use of any other prizes. They maintain that the desire to obtain any more substantial mark of preferment, than that of a particular place in the school, (whether it be a medal, a book, or a diploma,) has something in it of a more sordid and despicable kind than the other. We own, that, after paying the utmost attention to the subject, both practically and theoretically, we cannot but regard these views as an excess of refinement, and continue of opinion, that there is no just ground for this distinction between the two species of reward. The object of both is precisely the same. Nor can we perceive any thing less noble in aspiring to a permanent mark of distinction, which may be displayed

at home for the gratification of parents and friends, preserved as an incentive to future exertion, and transmitted perhaps as an heir-loom in the family, than in the desire to obtain a momentary triumph over a fallen rival. We are aware that it has been said, that it is bad teachers only, who require the aid of prizes. But if all who have derived, or might derive, assistance from them, are to be included in this class, we suspect that it will be found a very numerous one indeed. We would rather say that it is bad teachers only, that cannot turn them to good account. In the Sessional School they have undoubtedly been so powerful an engine in the introduction of all its improvements, that we should by no means willingly be induced to surrender what we have found of so great advantage.

In order to render the distribution of prizes as fair and as efficacious as possible, we think it would in general be desirable that there should be no long interval, (perhaps not above a quarter of a year,) betwixt the periods of distribution, and that there should be a regular register kept, of the place which each competitor held in his class, during the preceding interval. If the competition be of too long duration, many may be excluded from it, who are unable to join the class at its commencement; while others, who might now have entered upon a new competition with great ardour, and every prospect of success, give themselves up, for the remaining period of the existing struggle, to despair and want of exertion, in consequence of the ground which they lost at an earlier period. The abbreviation of the interval, too,

must obviously have the effect of giving additional spirit to the competition, as every one must have perceived, how much the eagerness of the aspirants is always increased, in proportion as the time of distribution draws nigh.

On the subject of prizes, another important question remains, Whether at school they should be granted exclusively for proficiency in knowledge, or in reward also of steady moral conduct. To the former arrangement it may very naturally be objected, that it excludes from all hope of distinction those, who, though slow in scholastic attainments, are yet amiable and virtuous in conduct; and that it has the appearance of giving to the faculties of the understanding a superiority over the far more valuable qualities of the heart. But, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that there is much difficulty in awarding prizes for good conduct. We can in general find sufficient *data* to determine, if not who are not the most meritorious, at least who are the most proficient scholars; but it is by no means always so easy to say whose general conduct has been the best. Take, for example, the present highest class in the Sessional School. The Author is perhaps as thoroughly acquainted with the different characters of the children, who compose it, as any public instructor can be expected to be with regard to his pupils. Yet, were he in this case to bestow prizes (as he has often proposed) for good conduct, he should be quite at a loss on whom to confer them. There is doubtless among the children a great diversity of character and temper;

but it were hard to say who should be accounted best. One is grave, another is gay ; one, by his amiable and endearing qualities, his gentle temper and manners, his kindness and gratitude, wins our affection ; another, under a rougher and less engaging exterior, by his manly conduct, his unimpeachable veracity, and unflinching integrity, no less securely commands our respect ; one from light spirits is continually falling into a multitude of peccadilloes ; while another of more prudence commits fewer, but from natural irritability of temper, more serious faults. Were the prize to be determined by the criterion of the competitor's name appearing least frequently in a black book of transgressions, it might be gained by one, who would have no chance at all of success, were it to depend upon his name appearing most frequently in a register of generous and disinterested traits. In such cases, it is not unfrequent to cut the Gordian knot, by leaving to the pupils themselves the privilege, together with all the odium, of awarding such prizes. But, in such a case, if the reward be held in due estimation, there is, we fear, a great danger of introducing into the school jobbing and heartburnings, which, in our seminary, we have never yet ventured to risk.

Wherever prizes are awarded for good conduct, it appears to us essential, that they should be open to all, to the *dux* and to the *dunce* alike. They should not, we are inclined to think, be like purses for beaten horses, for which none are to be allowed to compete, who have been unable to attain what un-

happily come to be considered the higher rewards : but totally independent prizes, which should, as much as possible, be held in the highest estimation. It is most desirable, doubtless, that the dunce should be able to obtain a prize ; but then it must not be one of the qualifications for obtaining it, that he is a dunce. In the latter case, we know, that they come to be regarded as *dunce-prizes*, memorials rather of incapacity than of merit.\*

\* The views here expressed with regard to the operation of *conduct-prizes* have been so fully realized in the Edinburgh Academy, where much benefit had been originally expected from them, that we understand its Directors have recently, (1832,) perceived the wisdom of abandoning them altogether.

## CHAP X.

## ON PUNISHMENTS.

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Quibusve  
Urgentur poenis? ————— VIRGIL,

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THAT in every large seminary for the education of young pupils, as well as in every other large community, PUNISHMENTS of some description or another are essential to its right management, is a proposition, which we should have deemed it quite superfluous to enunciate, were it not that the high pretensions of those, who boast that they have abolished *corporal* chastisement, have a strong tendency to mislead others into a notion, that they have been able effectually to banish punishment itself from their establishments; and that *there* alone that happy age has revived,

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quae, vindice nullo,  
Sponte sua sine lege fidem rectamque colebat:  
Poena metusque aberant.

That *preventive* measures are to be preferred either to remedial or retributive ones, we are perfectly willing to admit; and also that the arrangements of the monitorial system are, by its provisions, on this account, well calculated, to a certain extent, to supersede the necessity of punishment. But how does it operate this effect? Not by the abolition of punishment, but by its certainty. It is in vain to say with Quintilian, "*quod ne opus erit quidem hac castigatione si ASSIDUUS STUDIORUM EXACTOR astiterit.*" Of what use would a monitor or assistant (our *studiorum exactor*) be, if the little urchin, his pupil, might laugh in his face, and petulantly, and with impunity, tell him, that he would attend or not just as he himself pleased? This would, indeed, be insisting that he should make bricks without straw. When Quintilian afterwards complains, "*Pueri non facere quæ recta sunt coguntur, sed cum non fecerint puniuntur,*" he evidently takes for granted that there must be some method of *compulsion*.\* Dr. Bell, indeed, would have us believe, that, in his system of monitorial

\* Our friend Professor Pillans, in his recent letters on education, has given, to the word *coguntur* in this passage, a meaning, which we certainly did not anticipate. According to him, it implies no more than that *previous training*, which of itself leaves the pupil no *choice* but to do as he ought. He thus translates the passage: "The practice at present is too prevalent to punish boys when the wrong is done, rather than to *train* them so beforehand, that they CANNOT CHOOSE but to do right." We own we cannot go along with the learned Professor's interpretation; and, at all events, we never yet have seen that system of training, which is capable of producing such happy effects.



superintendence, the fear of punishment has no place. "The business," he says, "of our little teachers, (and they perform it to admiration,) is not "to correct, but to prevent faults; NOT to deter from "ill behaviour by the fear of punishment, but, by preventing ill behaviour, to preclude the use of punishment." In another passage, however, of this same author's writing, the truth comes out, and the mode in which the system works to the preservation of order and diminution of punishment, turns out to be neither more nor less, than what we have above described. "Scarcely," he there says, "can an offence be committed without instant detection, and "immediate correction. Any transgression, which "may require serious animadversion, the teacher reports to the master, who, when he sees occasion, "tries the accused by a jury of his peers."\*

But, though *punishment* be admitted to be essential to school discipline, the questions undoubtedly still remain, Is *corporal* punishment in any form also essential? Must the master still retain his ancient insignia of office, "*ferulae tristes sceptrum paedagogorum*," "*invisae nimium pueris, grataeque magistris*." Is the long continued and still almost universal prevalence of such insignia, to be exclusively ascribed to the cruelty or incapacity of all who wield them? Dr. Johnson's opinion on this

\* *Bell's Manual*, p. 22. If any reader is led by this passage to imagine, that in none of the Schools on Dr. Bell's system, is *any* punishment awarded, except after this formal and tedious trial, he will, we suspect, be quite in error.

subject is well known to all. His exclamation, "Rod I will honour thee for this thy duty," naturally reminds us of the traveller, who, on sight of a gibbet, thanked God he was again in a civilized country. It is with other feelings, we own, than those of unmingled gratitude or veneration, that we have been accustomed to regard this implement, which we conceive, must at best be considered as a great evil in itself, justifiable only by necessity. But that it is so justifiable and indispensable, at least in large establishments like the Sessional School, composed of boys of all ages, is the conclusion, to which, after much anxious deliberation, we have felt ourselves compelled to come. We are now decidedly of opinion, that, were this implement altogether banished from such a school, we should either sacrifice its general order, and the welfare of the individual scholars, or else be compelled to have recourse to some substitute neither less degrading and revolting, nor more unobjectionable. Often have we seen the bringing out of a child to receive a single stripe on the hand, restore that order and attention, which the young teachers and their assistants had been unable previously to procure. And is there really any other method, by which the same important end could, with children of six and seven years of age, or even upwards, so expeditiously, so effectually, and, at the same time, less objectionably, be attained?

In truth, the abolition of corporal punishment was tried for a time, in our school. A new master,

in entering upon office, expressed his conviction, that corporal chastisement might be entirely done away ; and that, though he had hitherto, in assisting his father, who was of the old school, been accustomed to a different mode of management, he was determined to try the experiment. This resolution the Author heard with much satisfaction, eager himself for the experiment, and knowing that it could never be made more *con amore*, than by one who was himself the proposer of this most desirable if practicable reform, and would, therefore, naturally and most justly take pride to himself in its execution. The experiment accordingly was tried. Symptoms of insubordination soon shewed themselves in the school. The monitors began to lose their control. Those, who were disposed to be idle, not only were so themselves, but also disturbed others. The Writer saw that it would ere long become necessary to resort to the old system, but was most unwilling to hasten the crisis, or to do any thing which might in the slightest degree injure the experiment. In the meantime, he had occasion to go to the country. On his return, the master told him, that the children had become really very disorderly. Now, for the first time, was hinted the necessity of *shewing*, at least, some instrument of correction. It then came out that, in the Writer's absence, the master had reluctantly been compelled not only to shew it, but to use it. The same we know to have been the result of similar experiments, tried, we believe, in equally good earnest. Such failures, we are aware, we shall be told, are the result of previous bad training, and that, if children were pro-

perly brought up from the first, chastisement would be quite unnecessary: they would become fond both of study and of goodness, on their own account, and as naturally as they are fond of their bodily food. This is doubtless a highly pleasing vision; but to those, who know any thing of human nature, we need hardly say, that it is one, which, in our present condition, we shall never see realized. There will, to the end of time, under any system of instruction, however improved, be both idle and wicked children, who, unless some effectual means of restraint be used, will make others as idle and wicked as themselves.

We are frequently told, indeed, about establishments, from which every species of corporal punishment has been banished, with the most complete success.\* On this subject we find it necessary to warn our readers against believing, that such punishment is in all cases as completely exploded, as the patrons of these institutions boast, and perhaps themselves believe. Even within the very narrow limits of our own personal means of investigation, we have found the contrary too often to be true. In some instances, where it was the proud assertion of the teachers, that they had ceased to employ corporal correction,

\* Reference in particular has been made to the practice of France, whence it is said the rod has been entirely expelled. It may possibly be very true that the emblem of punishment has been removed, which is by no means the difficulty to be surmounted. But surely it cannot with justice be said, that punishment itself, or even corporal punishment, has been abolished in a country, in whose public schools every day not boys only, but young ladies, are compelled to rest on their knees for a very considerable time upon a floor.

we have discovered, that they acquired the pernicious habit of striking their pupils with their fists, and of "shaking the delinquent," not merely (as Cowper represents his hoary sage Discipline) "with fits of awe," but also in a more substantial and less poetic fashion. In another school, which made a similar boast, the Writer said to some of the children, "Your master has no *taws*?" to which they all replied, "Ah! but he uses a *cane*." As an additional specimen of the manner in which both directors and the public may be misled in this matter, he may mention one instance more that fell under his own observation. He was told by the manager of a school, who, he knows, was incapable of wishing to deceive him, that such was the extreme mildness of his teacher, that, though he thought it right to retain the *form* of corporal correction, he made it a mere form, and, on no occasion whatever, inflicted any bodily pain. On a visit which he paid to this seminary, he saw several delinquents brought up *seriatim* for punishment. From the trembling and other symptoms of terror indicated in their looks, he was led to think that he was going to witness something more than a mere ceremony, however imposing. Judge of his astonishment, when he saw the director's statement apparently confirmed. The first child, still shaking, held up his hand, which the master, with the utmost gentleness, *touched* with his cane. A second, a third, a fourth, all advanced (though certainly not now with the same appearance of agitation) and were treated in a similar manner. At length a fifth approached, who, it

seems. had committed a more aggravated offence and "must therefore" (as the master observed) "receive something more:" he accordingly was *twice* touched in a similar manner! The real history turned out exactly as the Author suspected. These pats on the hand, he now knows, are by no means always of an equally gentle description, besides the additional infamy being occasionally inflicted, of tying the delinquent publicly to a post.

The most successful experiment, relative to the abolition of all corporal chastisement, with which we are personally acquainted, has been that, which Mr. Pillans had the honour of introducing into the most advanced class of the High School of this city. This class, however, is one of a very peculiar kind, being composed almost exclusively of lads in, or entering into, their *teens*, belonging to the higher and middling ranks of society, who, for eight or nine years previously, had been acquiring orderly habits under the ordinary methods of school discipline, besides enjoying the benefit of a domestic superintendence and tuition, which parents in the lower ranks have not leisure to bestow upon their families. In the Sessional School, where corporal chastisement does exist, and is administered with perfect fairness and impartiality, the master has seldom or never the slightest occasion to touch a boy of that advanced age, who has for any length of time been educated within its walls. And even in this particular class of the High School; punishment itself is by no means abolished, recourse being had for this purpose to extra tasks under the name of *pœnas*, a method of cor-

rection obviously quite inapplicable to young children at the very outset of their education.

Among the modes of punishment, which have been proposed as substitutes for corporal chastisement, we may mention, in the first place, those of Joseph Lancaster, which were originally hailed by his panegyrists as being among the greatest inventions of the age. Having none of his works, however, at present by us, we can speak only from recollection, and from such extracts as we find in a periodical publication, which warmly advocated his cause. "When a boy gets into a singing tone of reading," says Lancaster, "the best mode of cure that I have hitherto found effectual, is by force of ridicule. Decorate the offender with matches, ballads, (dying speeches if needful) and, in this garb, send him round the school, with some boys before him crying matches, &c. exactly imitating the dismal tones, with which such things are hawked about London streets, as will readily recur to the reader's memory. I have always found excellent effects from treating boys who sing or tone in their reading, in the manner described. It is sure to turn the laugh of the whole school upon the delinquent: it provokes risibility, in spite of every endeavour to check it, in all but the offender. I have seldom known a boy thus punished once, for whom it was needful a second time." "When I meet with a slovenly boy, I put a label upon his breast, I walk him round the school with a tin or a paper crown upon his head." A boy with a dirty face was punished by sending for a

very little girl, and making her wash off the dirt before the whole school, "accompanying her ablutions," (as Mr. Lancaster's advocate informs us,) "with a gentle box of the ear!!" The punishment for dirty hands, if we recollect it right, was still more unique, and most horribly disgusting. Two offenders of this description were compelled to stand out in presence of the school, with a filthy finger inserted in each other's mouth!!! We shall close this revolting detail with one short extract more, which seems intended to point out the gentleness and humanity of the system. "It is very self-dom, that a boy deserves *both a log and a shackle* at the same time! Most boys are wise enough, *when under* one punishment, not to transgress immediately, lest it should be doubled." Nothing appears to us more illustrative of the strong influence of party-spirit in warping the opinions of mankind, than the manner in which the whole of Mr. Lancaster's system of discipline was *originally* received, both by his admirers and his opponents. While Mrs. Trimmer, (than whom we can scarcely name a more benevolent and better intentioned individual,) incurred just ridicule by the silly objections, which in her zeal, she reared up against the system,—such as telling us, that toys should not be given to children as rewards, because they are worldly things, and may interfere with the eternal rewards of Heaven, and that prints should not be given, because they may hereafter be made the vehicle of indecent ideas;—its advocates, on the other hand, were no less absurd in the warm encomiums,



which they pronounced upon a class of punishments which are now universally scouted, and do not even maintain a place, so far as we believe, in any of the schools (if there be any) that still bear the distinguishing name of Lancasterian.

That ridicule should on no occasion, and in no manner, be employed for the amendment of faults, we are very far indeed from maintaining. In the case, for example, of the boy with the singing tone, we should by no means object to the master pointing out its resemblance to that of a cryer of a "last speech, confession, and dying declaration," or of "a list of all the names" of the horses booked for a race, nor to the *momentary* laugh which this might excite among his companions around him. But the parading of him round the school, the decorations, the precursors, are, in our opinion, highly objectionable, not only on account of the detrimental interruption of the ordinary business of the seminary, and the tyranny towards the unhappy sufferer, but also on account of its injurious effects upon his companions, who are made the instruments of inflicting this tyranny. With regard also to the punishment inflicted by the little girl on the dirty boy, we cannot help concurring in the opinion, which in some quarters was once treated as a false and squeamish delicacy, that it was almost as much calculated to teach the female inflictor a lesson of pertness, as to reclaim the other party from filthiness. All punishments, too, which consist exclusively in an ignominious exposure of the delinquent, are liable to this strong objection, that they in ge-

neral operate, not in the *direct*, but the *inverse* ratio of the depravity of the delinquent. A boy hardened in vice, and inured to punishment of this description, cares nothing about it, and laughs at it accordingly in presence of his companions; while, to another of a different and more amiable caste of character, the very same punishment may be most heart-breaking and tyrannical.

*Confinement in school*, while the companions of the culprit are at play, is a punishment which we know has sometimes been found efficacious, particularly in the case of those who habitually refuse to study at home. But it is accompanied with this disadvantage, that it has a natural and unfortunate tendency, to associate the very attendance on school with the notion of punishment. This method, however, does not appear to us so objectionable as the imposition of *pœnas*, as they are called, or tasks prescribed for the purpose of punishment. That a boy who obstinately refuses to learn a lesson, which is essential to his future improvement, should be compelled to learn that lesson—is quite necessary and proper; but that, because he has not learned one lesson, he should be compelled to learn two,—or, because he has been guilty of some moral turpitude, should be condemned to intellectual improvement as a punishment,—appears to be a most unhappy contrivance, for giving young people a thorough disgust with those studies, which they are thus taught to regard as penalties. It is obvious, too, that this is a punishment which cannot stand alone. To be effectual, it must be accompanied, in the case

of non-fulfilment, either with the lash or with confinement. That tyranny may be thus inflicted, as well as by any other mode of punishment, is obvious, and cannot better be illustrated, than by what we know was at one time a prevailing punishment in a certain institution, now under far better management, the exaction of the 119th Psalm being committed to memory as a task. What an association would the children in that seminary naturally form, not only with that psalm, but also with the whole Book of Psalms, if not with the entire volume in which they are contained, and with all their studies whatsoever?

To make the delinquent *lose grade* in his class—appears to be in many cases an advisable method of punishment, especially for inattention to study or offences of a like description. This is the only punishment, which the monitors should in any case be allowed to inflict of their own authority, and, even in the exercise of that authority, there should always lie an appeal to the master. *He* however, should, we conceive be in all cases absolute and uncontrolled; we are not partial to *juries* of school-boys.

We cannot close this chapter without remarking, that punishment of any kind should be resorted to as seldom as possible, and may in a great measure be superseded, by the master securing the affections and respect of his pupils. There is much truth in the observation of Dr. Bell, that, “a *maximum* of “improvement cannot be obtained without a *mini-*

“*num* of punishment.” There can be no stronger mark of incapacity in a teacher, than his being under the necessity of resorting to punishment more frequently than others placed in the like situation ; nor any higher recommendation of one, than his maintaining equal authority with less severity than his neighbours. What we have written above on the *necessity* of punishment, is intended for the guidance of *directors*, who might, from theoretical or popular notions, be induced, most injuriously, to curtail their teacher’s authority. Upon the *teacher* himself, on the other hand, we cannot too strongly inculcate the propriety of rendering the diminution of punishment the object of his anxious and incessant aim. We would assure him, that by kindness and gentleness he may hope to accomplish, what neither severity nor distant manners ever can attain. We would also remind him that it is his bounden and sacred duty, as far as possible, to distinguish between incapacity and in exertion, between want of power and want of inclination ; and that, under no circumstances whatever, can he be justified in punishing a boy, merely because Nature has formed him a dunce.

## CHAP. XI.

## ON THE EXPLANATORY METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.

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Interrogantibus libenter respondeat; non interrogantes percontetur ultro.—QUINTILIAN.

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**BEFORE** entering upon the consideration of the reading department, it may be proper to premise some general observations, on that method of **EXPLANATION**, which has been so highly approved of in the Sessional School. Its object is threefold: first, To render more easy and pleasing the acquisition of the mechanical art of reading: secondly, To turn to advantage the particular instruction contained in every individual passage which is read: and, above all, thirdly, To give the pupil, by means of a minute analysis of each passage, a general command of his own language.

It is of great importance to the proper understanding of the method, that *all* these objects should

be kept distinctly in view. With regard to the *first*, no one, who has not witnessed the scheme in operation, can well imagine the animation and energy which it inspires. It is the constant remark of almost every stranger who visits the Sessional School, that its pupils have not at all the ordinary appearance of Schoolboys doomed to an unwilling task, but rather the happy faces of children at their sports. This distinction is chiefly to be attributed to that part of the system, of which we are here treating ; by which, in place of harassing the pupil with a mere mechanical routine of sounds and technicalities, his attention is excited, his curiosity is gratified, and his fancy is amused.

In the *second* place, when proper books are put into the hands of the scholars, every article, which they read, may be made the means, not only of forming in their youthful minds the invaluable habit of attention, but also of communicating to them, along with facility in the art of reading, much information, which is both adapted to their present age, and may be profitable to them for the rest of their lives. How different is the result, where the mechanical art is made the exclusive object of the master's and the pupil's attention ! How many fine passages have been read in the most pompous manner, without rousing a single sentiment in the mind of the performer ! How many, in which they have left behind them only the most erroneous and absurd impressions and associations ! Of such associations, if we remember right, Miss Hamilton, in one of her

works upon education, affords some striking examples from her personal experience. To these we may add another, furnished by a gentleman of our acquaintance; which, strong as it is, will, we believe, be recognised by most of our readers, as too true a picture of what, from a similar cause, has not unfrequently occurred to themselves. He had been accustomed, like most schoolboys, to read, and probably to repeat, without the slightest attention to the sense, Gray's Elegy, not uncommonly known in school by the name of "The curfew tolls." What either "curfew" or "tolls" meant, he, according to custom, knew nothing. He always thought, however, of *toll-bars*, and wondered what sort of *tolls* were *curfew-tolls*; but he durst not, of course, put any *idle* question on such a subject to the master. The original impression, as might be expected, remained, and to the present hour continues to haunt him, whenever this well known poem comes into his mind.

But, in the *last* place, they little know the full value of the explanatory method, who think it unnecessary, in any case, to carry it beyond what is absolutely essential to enable the pupil to understand the meaning of the individual passage before him at the time. As well, indeed, might it be maintained, that, in *parsing*, the only object in view should be the elucidation of the particular sentence parsed; or that, in reading Cæsar's Commentaries in a grammar school, the pupil's sole attention should be directed to the manner in which the Gallic war was

conducted. A very little reflection, however, should be sufficient to show, how erroneous such a practice would be in either case. The passages gone over in school must of course be very few and limited, and the *direct* information communicated through them extremely scanty. The skill of the instructor must therefore be exhibited, not merely in enabling the pupil to understand these few passages, but in making every lesson bear upon the proper object of his labours, the giving a general knowledge and full command of the language, which it is his province to teach, together with as much other useful information, as the passage may suggest and circumstances will admit. As in *parsing*, accordingly, no good teacher would be satisfied with examining his pupil upon the syntactic construction of the passage before him as it stands, and making him repeat the rules of that construction, but would also at the same time call upon him to notice the variations, which must necessarily be made in certain hypothetical circumstances; so also in the department, of which we are now treating, he will not consider it enough that the child may have, from the context or otherwise, formed a general notion of the meaning of a whole passage, but will also, with a view to future exigencies, direct his attention to the full force and signification of the particular terms employed, and likewise, in some cases at least, to their roots, derivatives, and compounds. Thus, for example, if in any lesson the scholar read of one having "done an unprecedented act," it might be quite sufficient for



understanding the meaning of that single passage, to tell him that "no other person had ever done the like;" but this would by no means fully accomplish the object we have in view. The child would thus receive no clear notion of the word *unprecedented*, and would therefore, in all probability, on the very next occasion of its recurrence, or of the recurrence of other words from the same root, be as much at a loss as before. But direct his attention to the threefold composition of this word, the *un*, the *pre*, and the *cede*. Ask him the meaning of the syllable *un* in composition, and tell him to point out to you (or, if necessary, point out to him) any other words, in which it has this signification of *not*, (such as *uncommon*, *uncivil*,) and, if there be leisure, any other syllables which have in composition a similar effect, such as *in*, with all its modifications of *ig*, *il*, *im*, *ir*, also *dis* and *non*, with examples. Next investigate the meaning of the syllable *pre* in composition, and illustrate it with examples, (such as *previous*, *premature*.) Then examine in like manner the meaning of the syllable *cede*, and having shown that in composition it generally signifies *to go*, demand the signification of its various compounds *precede*, *proceed*, *succeed*, *accede*, *recede*, *exceed*, *secede*, *intercede*. The pupil will in this manner acquire not only a much more distinct and lasting impression of the signification of the word in question, but a key also to a vast variety of other words in the language. This too he will do far more pleasingly and satisfactorily in the manner which is here recommended, than by being enjoined

to commit them to memory from a vocabulary at home as a task. The latter practice, wherever it is introduced, is, we know, regarded by the children as an irksome drudgery; the former on the contrary is an amusement. The former makes a strong and lasting impression upon the mind; under the latter the information wished to be communicated is too often learned merely as the task of the day, and obliterated by that of the next. It is very true, that it would not be possible to go over every word of a lesson with the same minuteness, as that we have now instanced. A certain portion of time should therefore be set apart for this examination; and, after those explanations have been given, which are necessary to the right understanding of the passage, such minuter investigations only may be gone into as time will admit. It is no more essential, that every word should be gone over in this way, than that every word should always be spelt or syntactically parsed. A single sentence well done may prove of the greatest service to the scholar in his future studies.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that however useful such an examination may be with regard to a foreign language, it is quite superfluous with relation to a vernacular tongue. Nothing, however, can be a greater mistake. The humbler classes of society, in every sermon which they hear,—in every book which they read, however simple, and written peculiarly for their own use,—nay, in the Bible itself,—meet with a multitude of words and expressions, even of frequent occurrence, which, from want of such a key,

not only lose great part of their force, but are unintelligible, and are often grossly misunderstood. The Author would himself have been in a great measure ignorant of the full extent of the disadvantage, under which such persons labour in this respect, but for the representations of the lads in our evening school, many of whom were possessed of no ordinary abilities, and had received all the education formerly bestowed on persons in that rank of life. He was much struck, too, with a conversation, which he had on this subject, on occasion of a visit to a seminary in Newhaven,\* under the excellent tuition of a young man,† who had received his education at the Sessional School. He there met with a fisherman, the parent of one of the pupils, well known in the village as one of the most respectable, intelligent, and well educated of his class. He evidently took a deep interest in the proceedings, and, while the Writer was in the act of examining the children on the meaning of what they had read, he at length broke out in nearly the following manner: “Eh, sir, you’ll not know how little of this I understand, and how much I miss it: I learned to read like my neighbours, but I never learned the meaning, and I find it a hard thing to turn up the dictionary for

\* Newhaven is a fishing village in the neighbourhood of Leith.

† Mr. WESTWATER. A brother of this young person, who also received his education in our seminary, has recently introduced its principles into the town of Kirkaldy, where, we are happy to learn, his success has hitherto given the highest satisfaction.

every word." Can we wonder, if persons in this situation, in place of occupying their leisure hours with salutary reading, which is to them thus difficult and laborious, should too often devote them to more degrading and less innocent pursuits? From the manner, too, in which the education of the lower orders has generally been hitherto conducted, parents in this rank of life, have, for the most part, been quite satisfied, that their children have received a good education, when they have been taught to *read*, conceiving that this mechanical attainment is in some inexplicable way or other to act as a charm, though they be quite unable to apply it to any beneficial purpose.

An aged peasant on his latest bed  
 Wished for a friend some godly book to read ;  
 The pious grandson thy known handle takes,\*  
 And, (eyes lift up,) this savoury lecture makes ;  
 " Great A," he gravely reads ; the important sound  
 The empty walls and hollow roof rebound ;  
 The expiring ancient reared his drooping head,  
 And thank'd his stars, that Hodge had learn'd—to read.†

It is not, however, to the lower orders of society, that this mode of education exclusively holds out its benefits. How often have *ladies*, and others not very conversant with the dead languages, feelingly expressed to us their deep regret, that they had not been educated under the method practised in the Sessional School, and pointed out the disadvantages to which they have been thus exposed ! But why

\* The Hornbook.

† Tickell.

should we mention such alone? "If a GENTLE-MAN," Locke has well observed, "be to study any language, it ought to be that of his own country; try;" and, unless this be made a particular object of his study, and his knowledge of other languages be brought directly to bear upon it, his education will be miserably deficient. Nor is it the knowledge of language alone, that is to be communicated in this way. Along with every thing which is read, a judicious teacher will, at the same time, give his pupils all such *general information*, as may tend either to illustrate what is read, or to receive illustration from it. Knowledge communicated in this incidental manner, we can well attest, often makes a far deeper and more lasting impression, than when communicated by any more direct method.

In opposition to the opinion which we have quoted from Mr. Locke, it has, till within these very few years, been the prevailing practice in this country, altogether to drop the study of the vernacular tongue, upon entering on that of the dead languages; or, in other words, at the very time when that study might be turned to greatest advantage. The public, therefore, justly hailed with much satisfaction, the recent introduction into our leading classical schools in this quarter of a much wiser arrangement, by which a particular portion of the time of their pupils is devoted to the study of their own language. We are aware that doubts have been expressed of the ultimate success of this attempt, on the ground that this part of their studies

is looked down upon by the boys with contempt ; and we are free to acknowledge, that the issue will, in no slight degree, depend upon the manner, in which this most important department shall be conducted. If it be made a mere *reading class*, with the addition perhaps of a few prescribed questions taken out of a book, the apprehended result will inevitably ensue ; and not those seminaries alone, in which this method is practised, but education in general, will be deeply injured by the failure of this most desirable experiment. But if this department be rightly conducted ; if, along with due attention to good reading, the understanding of the pupils be at the same time cultivated, which is the best source of that elegant accomplishment ; if they be made well acquainted with the full force and meaning, as well as the grammar of their own tongue, and also its connexion with those languages which they learn at their other hours of study ; if, as they advance, they be instructed in the principles and trained to the practice of composition ; and if their English reading be throughout rendered the means of forming their taste, and the vehicle of general information ;—we hesitate not to predict, that there is no department in those schools, which will afford more interest or pleasure to the pupils, possess more dignity in their eyes, or give more satisfaction to their parents. And we make this prediction with the greater confidence, from the very eager desire, which we daily hear expressed by such pupils, to be taught English according to this method, which may ob-

viously be carried to the highest perfection in a classical school.\*

As the method of explanatory and incidental instruction, which we are here endeavouring to recommend, is adapted to pupils of every rank and condition in society, so we conceive it to be alike calculated for the benefit of those of all talents and capacities. It is not, as has been absurdly imagined by some, a few clever boys only who can profit by this method; neither is it, according to the no less erroneous notion of others, only a few dull ones that stand in need of its assistance; though, doubtless, the latter most require its aid, and the former can carry its advantages to the highest perfection. It awakens curiosity in breasts, where it had hitherto lain dormant; where this highly important principle has previously been alive and active, it affords wider scope for its exercise and gratification. It may not be improper here, for the encouragement of others, more particularly to notice two instances that occurred in our own seminary, in which we consider this method to have been peculiarly useful; the one being the case of a poor *idiot* (for so at least we originally accounted him) to whom the ordinary methods of education would, without some assistance of this description, have been quite unavailing; and the other, that of a very interest-

\* Our evening school is frequently attended by young men employed at the time in classical studies, and even by students in the University; all of whom have principally been attracted by the manner in which this department is conducted.

ing *blind* boy, to whom these methods were inaccessible. In both instances, too, with a trifling exception to be noticed in its proper place, the advantages were communicated to these unfortunates in the ordinary course of the school, without deranging on their account for a single moment any of its regular operations.

We regret that we have it not in our power to give any particulars of poor "Jamie's" history, beyond those which fell under our own observation. His father, on introducing him to the school, candidly informed the Master, that he had no expectation of his son profiting in the way of education, and that his principal object in bringing him to us was to have him kept from the streets. When the Author first cast his eyes upon him, he must acknowledge that his emotions were nearly akin to those of the King of Israel, when Naaman the leper presented to him the letter of the King of Syria.\* The boy's countenance was vacant, lowering, and dejected, and his general aspect, (if the Author may judge from his own first impressions,) rather repulsive, than of a nature calculated to excite unmingled sympathy. He seemed quite indifferent about every thing, and unwilling to be taken notice of, and continued in this state for some time after his introduction to the school. He could give no account of his age, but was, in point of height, as tall as any of the biggest boys in the school, who are from 12 to 15 years. It was found necessary to place him in the lowest class,

\* 2 Kings v.



among children of 5 or 6. These, as might naturally be expected, when they found their gigantic class-fellow hardly able to keep pace with the dullest of themselves, and not venturing to resent any indignities offered him even by the youngest, began to entertain towards him feelings of no very high respect, and to annoy him with every kind of little childish tricks. Very different were the feelings and behaviour of the elder scholars. They not only were at pains to protect Jamie from every insult, but also, latterly, took the deepest interest in his progress, which they anxiously watched with an eye at once of eager curiosity and of tender affection, while they also made him the subject of their own frequent conversation. At first he entered upon his lessons obviously as an unwilling task. Not long afterwards, however, we were led to think, that the explanations given him by his monitor of the little words, which he was now able to read, and the accounts of the things themselves which these words indicated, though they could present little novelty to almost any other of the same age, were listened to by him with considerable interest. Standing by, accordingly, one day, when the monitor was explaining to his class, that an ox was the animal they saw so often passing to the market, and which gave them beef, the writer of the present Account turned round to Jamie, and asked him if he knew now what an ox was, " Oh ay " was his answer, " it sticks folk." This answer, simple as it was, had so much more in it of the nature of a gratuitous remark, than any thing else that had yet dropt from the same quarter,

and seemed to give such pleasure to himself, that we did not lose the opportunity of bestowing upon it high commendation, which was immediately received with a smile of self-complacency, that afforded us infinite satisfaction. That principle of self-emulation on which we have always placed so much reliance, being thus awakened, we were at all pains to encourage him to make similar remarks, which every day became more and more shrewd. Not satisfied with emulating himself, he soon took no less delight in rising above his Lilliputian companions, and his ordinary place at length, in a class of 24 or 25, was about third or fourth, while he not unfrequently rose to the top. It is well worthy of remark, that from the time he thus began to rise in his class, we never heard any more of indignities being offered him by those whom he was now surpassing. In place of declining any longer to be spoken to, nothing now gave him greater pleasure than to have an opportunity of display, and, whenever he saw the Author approaching for the purpose of examining his class, his countenance began to brighten, and he used to turn round to his class-fellows on either side of him, with much eagerness exclaiming, "There's Mr. Wood, there's Mr. Wood." His general aspect, too, now indicated apparently greater intelligence, and undoubtedly greater happiness. As a proof of this, we may mention the following incident. A Lady who happened to see him soon after his admission into the school, having occasion, a considerable time after, to repeat her visit, requested in the course of it to be

taken to the class where Jamie was. The truth was, she had already seen that class, and had heard this very lad examined at uncommon length, along with the rest of his companions, but had not recognised him. We had much difficulty in convincing her of his identity. She said, that, in consequence of his being so much taller than those about him, she had taken particular notice of him; but, from the intelligent answers which he returned, and his happy looks at the time of giving these answers, so different from what she had seen on her former visit, she had immediately banished from her mind all idea that this was the same individual. When he first entered the school, he could not count 5, but in consequence of lessons on this subject, given him by us at leisure intervals, (and which were the only lessons ever peculiarly addressed to himself,) he was at length able to count with ease so far as 20; or if we remember right, even to 30, and to associate the names of the numbers with the numbers themselves. While this unfortunate, but now interesting youth, was advancing thus prosperously, and we were anxiously looking forward to the final result, curious to discover at what period he should be left behind by those with whom he was at present able to compete, he unfortunately disappeared from the school. Nothing more was heard of him till the Master met him one day in the street along with a woman, who told him that Jamie had lost his father, but who was in every other respect quite incommunicative. He could not learn from her what they were doing, or intended to do with the lad. She was urged to send him back to

school, and informed that no charge whatever should be made for his education ; but he never returned. This is a circumstance, which we cannot too deeply lament, as precluding us from witnessing the farther progress of this interesting experiment. Even so far, however, as that experiment was permitted to proceed, it has to ourselves, at least, been not destitute of instruction, by exposing the rashness of those conclusions, which we at first far too hastily formed, from the appearance of our unfortunate charge, the account which had been given of him by his father, and his first unpromising attempts at education. It is very true, that there are many other hopeless cases, in which the same results (such as they were) cannot be expected, and that in no case can education be made to compensate the defect of natural abilities. Still, however, this incident is sufficient to teach us, not hastily to abandon even the most apparently hopeless condition of our species, not to keep them at too great a distance, nor to allow them to entertain too low an opinion of themselves ; but, on the contrary, by kindness, encouragement, and familiar instruction, to raise this unhappy class as high in the scale of being as their limited powers will admit. How well the system pursued in the Sessional School falls in with these views, must at once be apparent to the discerning reader without any additional comment.

The other case to which we have particularly alluded, is that of **ALEXANDER LAURIE**, a boy widely different from the former in respect of the mental faculties with which Nature had endowed him, but

to whom unhappily "wisdom" was "at one entrance quite shut out." This interesting boy had the misfortune to lose his sight a few days after birth. He could still distinguish light from darkness, used to tell us with much glee that the gas in the school-room was kindled or extinguished, and was able, he said, to discern the colour of scarlet, which he described "as a burning colour;" but beyond this, he had no benefit from vision. His other external senses, indeed, as is usual in such cases, were by exercise rendered proportionally acute; insomuch that he could distinguish many of the boys in the school, by some peculiarity, which the sense of touch suggested to him, in their dress or other circumstances of a similar kind. But, with the exception of such comparatively scanty knowledge as these senses could afford, and the active workings of his own mind, he was, of course, dependent for information entirely upon others, and upon the circumstances of his early education. One parent has been to him for many years as if he were not; but nothing can exceed the kindness and unremitting attention of his mother. From his earliest infancy she has been at all pains, from such scanty stores as she herself possessed, to communicate to him what knowledge she could. This, however, was quite inadequate to his far more comprehensive grasp. At any school where nothing is taught save the mechanical processes of reading, spelling, writing, &c. he could have derived little or no advantage, and nothing can mark more strongly how *exclusive-ly* these arts are associated with the ordinary notions

of a school, than the question, which is almost invariably put to us by every stranger on first discovering this boy in our seminary, "What benefit can *he* get here?" Happily, however, our benevolent and discerning secretary, who was acquainted with the circumstances of this family, saw at once the nature, if not the full extent, of the advantage, (for this we believe no human being could anticipate,) which the mode of instruction in practice in our school promised in a case like the present. With this view, upon his suggestion, Laurie's mother received the charge of the school-room, and was put in possession of the house attached to it, at the term of Whitsunday 1825. At the same time, the boy himself, then six years of age, was admitted into the school. For some time after his admission, he was amazed, bewildered, and mortified, on finding the extent of information displayed by the other children, and his own inability to take any part in their exercises. Conscious that he was not like them possessed of any previous stock of information, on which he might draw, he confined his first answers to matters of inference from those facts which were communicated to him by the others, and in this way the high excellence of his internal powers soon manifested itself. In matters of judgment and reasoning he, within a short time, showed himself not only far superior to all the children in school of his own age, but even to a great majority of those who were more advanced in years. All that he wanted was sufficient *data* for the exercise of his reasoning faculties, and this the Sessional School was well calculated to

supply. Undistracted by objects of sight, his attention was ever alive to every species of instruction which was communicated, and it soon appeared that his memory was not less remarkable than his judgment. No information ever was communicated to him, whether in the departments of nature, of elementary science, or of art, which was not carefully treasured up and preserved. Scarcely an observation of any importance was made in his presence, whether by those connected with the school, or by strangers, which was not immediately added to his own store; from which it was afterwards brought out, frequently to our great astonishment, on some future convenient emergency. The books of the School Library, which are read to him at home by his mother, have been to him a source at once of the greatest interest and information. His extensive and correct knowledge of language would put many to the blush, who are much older than himself, and have enjoyed the superior advantages of sight and acquaintance with other tongues. He can point out with remarkable accuracy the difference between literal and figurative expressions, and expose any irregularity in the use of the latter. His acquaintance even with the nicest subtleties of grammar has frequently attracted the particular notice of strangers. Scarcely a sentence, however new to him, and involved, can be read once over, in which he will not at once point out the principles of its construction, and detect any grammatical errors. Not unfrequently indeed, has this little fellow put both the visitors of the school, and ourselves right, where we

had precipitately formed erroneous conclusions as to the construction of a particular sentence. This indeed happened to us on one of the last public days. In geography also, his progress has been very remarkable; in which department he has been taught the relative positions of the places by handling a board. But in no department has he more distinguished himself, than in his knowledge and application of Scripture, of which the large proportion regularly read and explained in our school, in addition to all which he may hear from his mother at home, affords him an abundant store. Of his proficiency in this respect, no stronger illustration can be given than a conversation which occurred in the school, while the first edition of this work was in the press. A stranger, (who seemed strongly impressed with the opinion, that, in order to exalt Revelation, it is necessary to maintain, that there is no such thing at all as Natural Religion,) on occasion of some mention of the ancient philosophers in a passage which our pupils were then reading, asked Laurie "What did their philosophy do for them?" The boy returned no answer. "Did it," resumed the examiner, "lead them to any knowledge of religion?" "They had no RIGHT knowledge of God." "But could they be said," rejoined the visitor, in a marked tone of disapprobation, "to have any knowledge of God at all?" After a moment's thought, the child answered, "Yes." "That," observed the gentleman, "is by no means a right answer." Upon which the Author asked his young pupil, whether he had any reason for making this answer, to which he replied, "Yes."



“What is it?” “The Apostle Paul in the first of the Romans, says, that when **THEY KNEW GOD**,” laying an emphasis on these words, “they glorified him not as God.” This passed in presence of a large company of visitors. Had the gentleman thought proper to press the conversation farther, as the Writer in consequence thought it necessary to do on the following Sunday, he must have been quite satisfied, on the other hand, that our pupils were by no means impressed with any undue, or very favourable estimate of the extent of religious knowledge possessed by the wisest heathens, nor were at all insensible of the infinitely superior advantages in this respect, which may be enjoyed even by the poorest child in a Christian land. Whether the gentleman was satisfied with the child’s answer, which he admitted to be “very remarkable,” we know not. But, at all events, it is impossible not to indulge a hope, that the knowledge and ready application of Scripture, which these children indisputably possess, may be found of infinite value to them, when assailed with questions of still greater moment, than the one which was now discussed, and may enable them to “give to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them.” Surely a mind so furnished, must be more impregnable to the insidious assaults of infidelity, than his, who is in a great measure left to derive the knowledge of his religion, from the false representations of the infidel: and it must afford every benevolent man no slight satisfaction to find, that the mind may be so furnished, even amidst the darkest and most apparently

unpromising circumstances.—We were particularly desirous to have our pupil initiated in mental arithmetic, a branch in which all our scholars are instructed, but which obviously held out to him extraordinary benefits. This department alone was destined for a long period to be to us, in his case, a source of severe disappointment. In this study he did not appear, notwithstanding all his anxious endeavours, to be making the slightest progress, in so much, that we reported to his kind patron, Dr. Brunton, our total despondency upon this subject. Such a feeling, however, was happily quite a stranger to the child's own aspiring mind, which was of a nature ill calculated to brook defeat. The more he failed, the more he exerted ; and at length these exertions were, when the event was least expected, crowned with the most triumphant success. Within a very few weeks after the period when we made our desponding communication to the Doctor, he was not a little surprised to find his interesting charge making a conspicuous figure in this very department, in which he now outstrips almost all his companions.—In concluding this pleasing history, it is unnecessary to dwell on the advantages, which the subject of it derived from the mode of instruction pursued in the School, in which it was his happiness to be placed. Without the ample field which his talents (transcendent as they are) there received for exertion, they might have lain in his bosom dormant and useless ; and that mind, which has been stored with such a variety of knowledge, and rendered capable of still nobler attainments,

might still have presented an almost "universal blank." How pleasing too, to know that these results may be attained, not merely in an institution devoted to this particular class of misfortune, but even in a general school, provided it be conducted upon rational principles, and that without disturbing for a single moment its ordinary arrangements !

When the obvious advantages of the illustrative mode of instruction are considered, it may appear surprising, and we doubt not in a few years will be incredible, that it was not earlier adopted into general practice ; and still more, that, when its benefits were clearly exhibited, any attempt should have been made to render it an object of ridicule. With the public, indeed, all such attempts have completely failed. They saw the value of the method, whenever it was shown to them, and from the judgment, which they at first pronounced upon it, they have never for a single moment swerved. The more the system has been matured, and the better it has been understood, their approbation has the more increased. Its boast is not, that it is founded upon any newly discovered principle, but that it arises from the first and most obvious dictates of nature. What judicious mother, in teaching her child to read, would not be at pains to show him as early as possible the benefit of reading ? Would she not, in picking out for him the smallest words, when she came to the word *ox*, for example, tell him not by any regular definition, but in the simplest language, that it meant the animal, which he had so often seen grazing in the meadows ? Would

she not naturally do the same, with regard to every tree or plant, that happened to be mentioned? And, as his capacities unfolded, would she not gradually proceed to communicate to him such higher information, as his lessons might suggest? The more artificial methods, which the *art* of teaching has subsequently introduced, however useful some of them undoubtedly are, have had the unhappy effect of banishing, in a great degree, this natural teaching, and of substituting far too exclusively in its room a mere attention to the sounds of language. Still we are persuaded, that there always have been teachers, and these perhaps too the most unnoticed and unhonoured, who, by recurrence to these natural dictates, have produced the fairest fruits. Mark, for example, the account which Murdoch, the preceptor of Burns, gives of his own method of instruction, and bear in minds its results. That method coincides remarkably with the one practised in the Sessional School; and, in the opinion which Mr. Murdoch has expressed, both of its facility and importance, we most cordially concur. "The books," he says, "most commonly used in the school, were "the Spelling Book, the New Testament, the "Bible, Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse, "and Fisher's English Grammar. They, (Robert "and Gilbert Burns), committed to memory the "hymns, and other poems of that collection, with "uncommon facility. This facility was partly "owing to the method pursued by their father and "me in instructing them, which was to make them "thoroughly acquainted with the meaning of every

“ word in each sentence, that was to be committed to memory.” [Why only in these?] “ By the bye, this may be easier done, and at an earlier period, than is generally thought. As soon as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order, sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply all the ellipses. These, you know, are the means of knowing, that the pupil understands his author. These are expedient helps to the arrangement of words in sentences, as well as to a variety of expression.”\*

In the national schools, Dr. Bell introduced a method of examination, which, though not without its use, was obviously quite inadequate to accomplish the objects, which we had in contemplation. In explaining, for example, the text, “ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets,” which we think is one of those, that Miss Hamilton tells us was all her life connected in her mind with an absurd association formed in early youth, the examination, according to this method, would in general be of the following description: “ What is said of these two commandments?” “ The Law and the Prophets hang on them.” “ What are the Law and the Prophets said to do?” “ They hang.” “ On what do they hang?” “ On these two commandments.” But of what is meant by “ the Law,” or “ the Prophets,” or by the *PROPHETS HANGING on the two commandments*, no

\* Currie's Life of Burns, p. 88.

explanation would in all probability be given. We shall not say, that, under this system, no teacher ever carried the explanation further than we have here mentioned. But, after the most anxious inquiry at the numerous visitors of the Sessional School from England, who take a deep interest in education, we may venture to assert, that the contrary is the common, if not the invariable practice. Hence the surprise, which such visitors express, on examining our school, and the extravagant praise, which they are too apt to bestow upon it. Hence, too, the erroneous tendency on the part of those, who know the explanatory method only on the narrow scale which we have just described, to think lightly of its importance, and to imagine, that it can be carried to no farther extent, than that to which they have been accustomed.

In the Sessional School, as we formerly mentioned, along with some other arrangements of the Madras system, the Directors naturally at first introduced the method of explanation practised under that scheme. Its meagerness and insufficiency, however, were soon apparent. It, to a certain extent, undoubtedly secured the attention of the children, but it left them still very ignorant of the meaning of what they read in school, and destitute of that command of their language, which might enable them to read with pleasure and with profit elsewhere. The author's anxious aim, therefore, was to infuse more life and energy into the system, and to render it more rational and intellectual, to make the pupils *understand* as well as *read*, *use* as well as "*name* their

tools." In accomplishing this object, he was in some measure guided by the recollection of his own early education. How different, he well remembered, in point both of interest and utility, from the dry translations of ordinary teachers, were Dr. Adam's lessons, enlivened as they were with every species of illustration, etymological, grammatical, historical, antiquarian, and geographical, bearing reference at one instant to the sayings of the wise ancients, at another to the homely proverbs of our own country. How much better did his pupils acquire a knowledge of the idioms of the Latin language, from the variations, which he required them to make, in the construction of the passages which they happened to read, than from all the rules in his grammar! While the formal lessons, which he was himself in the habit of prescribing as tasks, from his own excellent work on Roman antiquities, were generally most irksome and forgotten almost as soon as learned, the lesson of to-day expelling that of yesterday from the memory, how much more pleasingly, distinctly, and durably, were the same instructions impressed upon the mind in an incidental form, through the medium of the ordinary reading! Such an illustrative method of instruction, the writer was led to think, ought to be made the fundamental basis of all teaching, while every more artificial detail should be resorted to merely as an adjuvant. If in one respect the Seasonal School, composed entirely of children destitute of so many advantages, presented a less promising field for its exercise, it was one, he conceived, on the other hand, in which for this

very reason, it was particularly required. The experiment was accordingly tried: and the sprightliness and vivacity, the mental activity and culture, the love of reading and extent of information which it produced, were of the most gratifying nature. The school now attracted the particular, though unsolicited, notice of the public. And, if it has thus been the means, not only of conferring the most important benefits upon the hundreds, who have been educated within its walls, but also of extending these benefits beyond its own limits, by securing to the important subject of education a greater share of public attention, and rendering it more rational and less mechanical than it had hitherto too frequently been,\* its conductors have good reason to feel themselves amply rewarded for all their toils.

\* Our readers can hardly fail to have remarked, that there is now scarcely any account of the public examination of a school in Scotland to be found in the newspapers, which does not particularly notice the manner in which the children have been taught to understand and explain what they read; whereas but a year or two ago no such thing was ever so much as hinted in these reports. Such a circumstance assuredly affords no indication of that aversion to improvement, which we fear is sometimes too hastily laid to the charge of a class of the community, whose inclinations to forward the cause of education, are, we well know, frequently much stronger, than the prejudices of others, and the circumstances of peculiar embarrassment in which they are themselves placed, always permit them at once to carry into effect. In these respects we ourselves had obviously a great advantage, which, we apprehend, is by no means sufficiently taken into account of judging of others.



## CHAP. XII.

## READING LESSONS.

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*Parva docemus ; sed est sua etiam studiis infantia.*

QUINTILIAN.

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ON the subject of **READING**, the first matter which naturally comes under consideration, is the mode of teaching the **ALPHABET**. In this department the Sessional School cannot boast of any novelty or peculiarity. The child is first taught to name so many of the letters ; then so many more, with which the former are afterwards mixed up ; and so forth, till the whole alphabet is in this manner exhausted. The letters are pasted on separate little pieces of wood, and exhibited on a box, contrived by Dr. Thomson for the use of his own parish school, so as to be easily shifted, and formed into various arrangements. As no peculiar importance is, in the Sessional School, attached to the order in which the letters are learned, those are first taught, which stand first in the ordinary arrangement of the al-

phabet, and the rest follow in succession. It seems quite unnecessary to perplex a child, at this period of his education, with the classification of consonants, such as their division into *mutes*, *semi-vowels*, *double consonants*, and *liquids*; nor even with the more familiar division of the letters into *vowels* and *consonants*: for it is no easy matter, and certainly not worth the trouble, to make him then comprehend the objects of such divisions. Neither does it seem at all advisable, to annoy him with any abortive attempt, to make him at this period understand the different shades of sound of the vowels, (particularly under their technical names of *long* sounds, *short* sounds, and *name* sounds,) which can only be learned aright by practice and experience, after he has been taught to combine the letters. It is sufficient for the present object, to teach him their *forms* and *names*. Some, we are aware, who disapprove of troubling the children at this period with any other classification of letters, attach great importance to their attention being early called to the division into *labials*, *dentals*, *gutturals*, and *nasals*; which, they conceive, should be taught at the very commencement, along with the form of the letters, under the more familiar names of *lip* sounds, *teeth* sounds, *throat* sounds, and *nose* sounds, or the like. They are of opinion, that the alphabet cannot be rightly taught, unless the letters be arranged according to some such classification, and the pupil be instructed to point out the particular organ, by which the sound is emitted. For ourselves, we are

inclined, with one \* who cannot, in general, be accused of paying too little attention to such matters, "to think every mechanical account of the organic formation of the letters, rather curious than useful." It must be very seldom, indeed, that a child at school can require such aid to enable him to speak; or that he will not learn this more effectually by imitating the sound, than by any very narrow inspection of the organ.

After the child has mastered the alphabet, he is immediately, according to the practice of the Sessional School, instructed in the reading of words OF TWO LETTERS. It will be remarked, that we have here used the term *words*, and not *syllables*. In most other schools, it is the practice to make the pupil rhyme over every possible combination of two letters into *syllables*, whether forming words or not; e. g. *ba, be, bi, bo, bu, by; ca, ce, ci, co, cu, cy; da, de, &c. &c.*,† and so forth, through all the

\* Mr. Walker. See the introduction to his Pronouncing Dictionary.

† "In the Madras system," says Dr. Bell, "the whole class *haw* together from the mouth of the teacher, and as soon as *may* be, of one another, (in an adjoining apartment, if there be *one*,) *ba, be, bi, bo, bu*, the sound being an echo to the SENSE; and *a, e, i, o, u*, and *ha, he, hi, ho, hu*; and also, *va, ve, vi, vo, vu*, and *wa, we, wi, wo, wu*; taking places according to their loudness, and to the right pronunciation of the letters and the aspirate, till all can be heard from one end of the room to the other." See *Bell's Manual*, p. 34. What the learned Doctor means by saying, that in this case, "the sound is an echo to the sense," we cannot pretend to divine, never having been able to discover what "sense" there is in *va, ve, vi, vo, vu*.

combinations of a vowel with a consonant prefixed ; and afterwards in like manner, *ab, eb, ib, ob, ub ; ac, ec, ic, oc, uc : ad, ed, &c. &c.*, through all the combinations of a vowel with a consonant subjoined. Such also was the practice of the Sessional School till within these very few years. With the exception of the alphabet, no part of the children's education was found so dull, so tedious, and irksome, as this ; while they were, during the whole of this long preliminary process, kept quite in the dark with regard to its ultimate object. This was sufficiently testified in their vacant, dogged, and unhappy looks. The practice was obviously pernicious in two ways : it both gave the child a natural disgust with his education, and also inured him to early habits of rhyming a quantity of sounds, without ever directing his attention, in the slightest degree, to their sense or object. The Writer of this work was so sensible of these objections, that he felt an anxious desire to see this part of the procedure either abridged or enlivened. It was a considerable time, however, before he attempted to carry this desire into effect. It has never, indeed, been without the greatest hesitation, that he has ventured to deviate from any long established practice. The present one, too, had undoubtedly the merit of being founded on systematic principles, and had possibly, he conceived, been dictated by necessity. In making any change, accordingly, in this matter, it was resolved to proceed with the greatest caution, to watch narrowly its operation and effects, and, in the event of it being found either ineffectual or in-

expedient, without hesitation to abandon it, and revert to the common practice, however irksome.

To carry the experiment into effect, an elementary book was prepared and printed, but only a very small impression was thrown off, for the use of the school. This book contained no unmeaning sounds, but *words* only which were familiar to the children, and which they were called upon to explain. No sooner was it introduced, than its good effects in inspiring animation and activity, where all had hitherto been cold and spiritless, were immediately apparent, and excited no small astonishment, both among the elder pupils and the visitors of the seminary. The pleasure, which the children experienced, in finding themselves already able to read the words, which they had been accustomed to speak, was not unlike the delight of the infant in his first attempts to pronounce those words, which he has been accustomed to hear. And, when they were desired to explain them, or rather to give examples of their application, the whole assumed the appearance, far more of an amusement, than of a task; and the only difficulty was to restrain them, so as to allow each to give his answer in his turn.\* In

\* In one of the newspaper attacks, which have been made upon this part of our system, its *enlivening* effects are still candidly admitted in the strongest terms. Every one, who has been occupied in the education of very young children, must at once perceive the infinite value of such a concession: for what can possibly be of more importance at this period, than to render them at once attentive and pleased?—In the same article, an attempt is made to ridicule the system, by introducing an imaginary conver-

due time it also turned out, that the change was no less profitable than it was pleasing. It was found, that the pupils were able to read interesting and instructive passages, both much sooner, and with fully as great correctness, and far more understanding, than they had done before. Habits of attention were formed, and the method of explaining and illustrating, which hitherto we had commenced only at a later period of study, was facilitated to a much greater degree than had been anticipated. As a proof of the additional interest, which the children began to take in reading, it was observed, that they were now in the habit of turning over the leaves even of their earliest book, to see what they would have to read next; and, as they advanced, nothing could be a greater punishment to them, than to withhold the use of the school-library. It is highly gratifying also to learn, that, in the many seminaries and private families, in which the Sessional elementary school-books and method of preliminary education have been adopted, their intro-

sation between a master tailor and his new apprentice, about the reason why the latter is desired to sit cross-legged, &c. Now, we must fairly own, that such a conversation, so far as it relates to things which the apprentice did not previously understand, instead of appearing to us at all ridiculous, is precisely what we should expect every good-hearted master to do in such circumstances. Such a thing can appear absurd only in the eyes of him, who strangely makes it a matter of principle, as well as of practice, to compel his pupil reluctantly to do what he is bid, without indulging him either with the gratification, or the facility, of rendering him acquainted with its object.

duction has been followed by the like pleasing and successful results.

To this method it has been objected, that there are many syllables, which do not constitute entire words; and that, unless every one of these syllables be originally taught in a separate form, the pupil cannot be expected afterwards to read the words which they compose. To this objection it might be sufficient to oppose our own experience, and that of those, who have adopted the same method of teaching. But it may farther be contended, that, if the irksome preliminary training contended for on the other side, were so essential, as its supporters maintain, their own system would be most imperfect, and it is difficult to conceive, according to their notions, how a child ever learned under it to read at all. It is quite notorious, that every vowel has several distinct sounds: one of them has no fewer than four, widely different from each other. Yet, in combining these vowels with consonants, so as to form the syllables, *ba, be, bi, &c.* one only of these sounds, and that by no means always the most frequent, was ever under the old system taught the child.\* Thus, for example, the pronunciation of

\* It is very true, as we have already mentioned, that, at the time of learning the vowels themselves, an awkward attempt was made to teach the child their various sounds, as, for example, to pronounce the letter *a*, under its different sounds of *ai, aw, ah*; but, in combining them with consonants into syllables, we never heard of any master teaching his scholars, in pronouncing the syllable *ba*, to say *bay*, or *baw*, or *bah*; though this should obviously, according to the principle, of which we are now treating, have been quite essential.

the syllable *wa* in *wafer* is as widely different, as can well be imagined, from the pronunciation of the same syllable in *water*, yet it was the first only which we learned when we rhymed *wa*, *we*, *wi*. So also the syllable *fa* is quite different in the words, *fable*, *ineffable*, and *father*, but the two last pronunciations of this syllable we were never taught. In like manner, there is the greatest difference between the syllable *fi* in *affiance* and in *infidel*; between *al* in *altar* and in *alimony*; and between *on* in *only* and in *onset*. Yet so it was, that the many sounds, which were omitted, came to be just as well learned, as those that had previously been rhymed.\* The truth is, that it is only by actual practice in reading, that the proper pronunciation of the syllables in each word can be acquired, and it appears therefore most desirable that the child should be led into this practice as soon as possible. The method, which seems best adapted to this purpose, is to make him read, in the first place, the small words of the language, and gradually to lead him on to those which are larger. In this we do not pretend to say that there is any novelty. We doubt not, that the practice originally employed in teaching children to

\* In Dr. Bell's elementary books, all the combinations of the consonants with the letter *y* are entirely omitted, for which he gives this reason: " *Y* is omitted for the present to prevent the confusion of *li*, and *ly*, and to shorten the first lessons." While the Doctor seems to have participated in our desire to abbreviate that irksome preliminary process, which he has thought it necessary to retain, it seems odd that he should have preferred to familiarize the eye of his pupil with such combinations, as *bi*, *mi*, *fi*, rather than *by*, *my*, *fy*.



read, was for the parent or teacher to pick out at first from any book the smaller words, such as are now collected for him in our "First Book."

The first lesson in that book after the alphabet is the following table of short words.

" Be	<i>He</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>we</i>	Ye	<i>By</i>	<i>fy</i>	<i>my</i>
" We	<i>Fy</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>ye</i>	My	<i>Me</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>be</i>
" By	<i>Ye</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>fy</i>	He	<i>Be</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>me</i>
" Me	<i>My</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>by</i>	Fy	<i>We</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>he</i>
" O ye. Fy, fy. Be ye by me."							

It will be observed, that this lesson consists of eight words repeated in every variety of character, and order of arrangement. It has been found quite easy, as well as highly useful, to familiarize the eye of the child, at an early period, with the Italic as well as the Roman character; whereas, formerly without such a habit, the pupil, at a far more advanced stage of his education, was constantly found stumbling, or even brought completely to a stop, when he met with the words in the Italic form, which are interspersed through every part of his Bible.

The second lesson consists, in like manner, of the words *Go*, *Ho*, *Lo*, *No*, *So*, *Wo*, in every variety of character and arrangement, and mixed up at last with those of the preceding lesson: thus,

" Go	<i>Ho</i>	<i>lo</i>	<i>no</i>	So	<i>Wo</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>so</i>
" No	<i>Lo</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>go</i>	Ho	<i>Go</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>lo</i>
" Wo	<i>So</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>we</i>	He	<i>No</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>fy</i>
" Lo	<i>Be</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>ho</i>	Ye	<i>Me</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>wo</i>
" Fy no. Go ye. So we go. Lo! I go by."							

The third lesson makes an addition of the words *On, Or, Ox, Up, Us*, on a similar plan. The fourth, in like manner, adds the words *Am, An, As, At, If, In, Is, It*. The fifth, which adds the irregular words, *Do, To, Oh, Ah, Ha, Ay, Of*, and comprehends, it is believed, every word of two letters in the language, is as follows :

“ *Do To oh ah Ha Ay of ha*

“ *To Of ay do Ah Oh do oh*

“ *Ay Ha ah to Of Am so ay*

“ *Or He ha go Be Lo we of*

“ *Oh Ye at ox An Ah up by*

“ *In Do ho us On Me it wo*

“ *My If to is No As fy in*

“ *Oh fy to do so. Do ye as I do. Wo to me if I do so. Ah ! is it so ? Ay, it is so. Ha ! it is he. Am I to do it, or he ?*”

All these lessons the class are forthwith instructed to read, spell, and explain. In reading each table at first, they are allowed to say, *b, e, be ; h, e, he, &c.* It has sometimes been doubted, whether this previous naming of the letters gives any facility to the pupil. Upon trial, however, it has been found, that, in most instances, it is of great service. As soon as the class are able to read the table with this assistance, they are then required to do so without naming the letters ; and it is at this stage they read the sentences annexed to the table, in doing which they are never allowed to name the letters. In *spelling* these short words, the monitor or master pronounces

the word, and the pupil names the letters, without any thing more about the matter.

In *explaining*, at this stage, it is a special instruction to the monitors, never to exact any regular definition, but to be satisfied with any explanation given by the child himself, which indicates his knowledge of the meaning, though it be conveyed in his own ordinary or homely language, or by mere signs. The answers, accordingly, are of various kinds, and made in various forms. Sometimes the explanation is given by a somewhat equivalent term, as *Ye*, you ; *Lo*, look ; *Me*, myself ; *Ay*, yes ; *Us*, you and me : *Ho*, halloa. Very often it is given by an example, as *My*, my book ; *Go*, go to school, or go home ; *So*, do so ; *On*, on the floor ; *In*, in the school ; *Oh*, oh dear ; *Ah*, ah me. Sometimes it is given by a change of case, as *He*, him : *We*, us. Not unfrequently, too, as we have already mentioned, it is made by a sign, as *Me*, by pointing to one's self ; *He*, by pointing to another boy. The great object, it will be remembered, of all explanations *at this stage*, is to enliven what would otherwise have been intolerably dull, to teach the child that every word he reads has a meaning, and to form him to early habits of attention. How these objects have been accomplished in the Sessional School, by the simple means, which we have just mentioned, all who are acquainted with it can attest. Would the method be improved by rendering it more artificial and technical ? In speaking of the word *ox*, for example, would our object be as well attained, by teaching the child

to repeat any translation of the definition somewhere referred to by Dr. Johnson, in order to expose the inadequacy of all definitions, "Animal, quadrupes, ruminans, cornutum;" as when we hear him tell us, in his own familiar language, that *ox*, means "a muckle coo."\* He is delighted to find, that, by putting together the two letters *o* and *x*, he can express that animal, which he sees grazing in the meadows, or passing the door of the school perhaps to go to the market; and this is all we want. If we farther tell him, (and it very frequently indeed happens that this is the first time he receives the information,) that the flesh of the *ox* or *cow* is *beef*, we add something to this scanty fund of information, and afford him perhaps no little satisfaction. All this however, we were well aware, could not fail to encounter the sneer of the pedant.† To him whose own knowledge extends not beyond technical slang, nothing has, in

\* The Scottish expression for a *large cow*. Such an explanation as this, indeed, from a child in the higher ranks of society, would of course be quite out of place and absurd; still, however, we would wish the account which *he* gives to be equally puerile and familiar.

† A young teacher, who had been sent to visit our school, on witnessing this part of our proceedings, turned round, observing with a sneer, "Who gives the children such definitions as those?" "Sometimes," the Writer replied, "they are given by themselves; sometimes by their monitor; sometimes by the master." "They are no *definitions* at all." "Perhaps not; but which of them do you object to?" "To all of them." "Have the goodness to specify one which you consider most objectionable." "*Us*, for example." "Well! what did they say of us?" "*You and me*; that is no definition." "What would you have had

all ages of the world, and in all departments of education, been naturally more repulsive, than plain, simple, familiar illustration. How well does Plato represent the sophist Hippias as scandalized at the notion of his condescending to argue with a man like Socrates ; who, in investigating the nature of beauty, could resort to such low examples as a fair horse, or a fair pot well-glazed !\*

“ them say ?” “ Oh, I certainly never should have taught them that.” “ What then would you have taught them ?” “ I would have told them it was a pronoun ! !” “ That child,” (probably not above five years of age,) “ would certainly have been made much wiser by what you call a definition.”

\* We trust that no one will do us the injustice to suppose, that we have the slightest intention to apply these remarks to all, who employ a system of education in this department different from our own. They have a reference to those only, who unsparingly deride and misrepresent a practice, which they do not understand, for no better reason, than that it is natural and simple.

## CHAP. XIII.

## READING LESSONS CONTINUED.

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Thou strokedst me, and madest much of me ; taught'st me how  
To name the bigger light, and how the less,  
That burn by day and night ; and then I loved thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

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WITH regard to combinations of THREE LETTERS, to which we next proceed, it will be remembered, that, in the old school, there was in general a very long and irksome process, precisely similar to what had been observed with regard to syllables of two letters. The child was taught to rhyme *bla*, *ble*, *bli*, *blo*, *blu*, *bly* ; *cla*, *cle*, &c. Then, after thus exhausting all the possible combinations of the letter *l* with another consonant prefixed and a vowel annexed, they proceeded in like manner with the letter *r* through all its combinations of *bra*, *bre* ; *cra*, *cre*, &c. ; and so also with *sha*, *she* ; *ska*, *ske* ; *sma*, *sme* ; *sna*, *sne* ; *spa*, *spe*, &c. &c. &c. Previously, however, to all this, there was, according

to some systems, an attempt made to give the two consonants a sound by themselves without the addition of a vowel ; thus, for example, the child was taught to sound *b*, *l*, *bil* ; *b*, *r*, *bir* ; and after all that, *bl-a* (pronounced *bil-a*) *blay* ; *br-a*, (*bir-a*) *bray* ; *sh-a*, (*ish-a*) *shay*, &c. through the whole variety of such combinations. A similar set of processes were observed with regard to the vowel prefixed to two consonants, such as *ash*, *esh*, *ish*, &c. ; and also with regard to the prodigious variety of possible syllables, in which a vowel might be placed between two consonants, such as *bab*, *beb*, *bib*, &c.

In this department of reading, as well as in the preceding one, the Sessional School First Book has no unmeaning sounds, and experience here also has shown that such are quite unnecessary. The next lessons, accordingly, after those of which we have already treated, consist of *words* of three letters. The first of them comprehends, we believe, all those in which two consonants are followed by a vowel, viz. *fly*, *ply*, *sly*, *cry*, *dry*, *pry*, *try*, *sky*, *spy*, *sty*, *fro*, *fry*, *she*, *shy*, *the*, *thy*, *why*. Each of these is represented in the table both in the Roman and the Italic character ; and to the table are subjoined short sentences in which each of them is exemplified, as, “ *Why do you cry so ?* ” “ *Is she shy or sly ?* ” “ *If I pry, I am a spy.* ” Each word in this, as in the preceding lessons, is spelt by the pupils, and an explanation or example is, as before, given of each. Thus a *sty* is often said to be “ *a sow’s house,* ” or “ *a red and sore thing about the eye ;* ” *fry* is “ *to fry herrings ;* ” and *shy* is

"*afraid to speak*," or still more frequently "*feared to speak*." For the perfection of these explanations any more than of those we formerly noticed, we certainly by no means contend; but we know well that they have been found to answer their purpose, which, in our opinion, is infinitely more important.

The next table consists of those words of three letters, in which the vowel precedes the two consonants, such as *act*, *and*, *elk*, *elm*, *ink*, *orb*, &c.; including those which have the same consonant repeated, as *all*, *ell*, *ill*, &c. To this table, as well as all the former, are annexed short sentences, in which examples are given of the words contained in it; such as, "*Is it an ash or an elm? It is an old ash. Is she to fry the egg?*" The words also are of course explained or exemplified. Thus, on mentioning the word *ebb*, the child will tell the monitor, or more probably at first will be told by the monitor, that it means "*the sea going back*." Nothing could be more absurd, than to attempt to give him any philosophical account of this phenomenon; but it is both pleasing and useful to him to ask, whether he has ever seen the sea in this state, to converse with him regarding it as a *fact*, and to tell him of its regular recurrence.

The third table of this class gives examples of those words, in which the vowel is placed between the consonants. We say *examples*, for the practice, which has been employed in the preceding tables, of giving every word of a particular description, is now discontinued, and *one* only of each kind given



as a specimen. This is done for two reasons : first, that the bulk of the little book might not be unnecessarily enlarged ; but more especially to bring the children early into the habit of spelling words, which they have not seen, by their analogy to those which they have seen ; and in like manner to read by analogy those words, which have not been presented to them in a separate form in a table. In order the better to explain our views, we think it right to present our readers with the present table at length.

Dab	Web	fib	rob	Cub	Bad	fed
kid	Sod	Mud	rag	leg	Pig	Hog
jug	ram	Gem	Him	rum	man	Ten
Sin	yon	gun	Cap	Lip	top	sup
Far	Her	fir	nor	Fur	Has	his
cat	Wet	Sit	hot	nut	Wax	Vex
six	box	Yes	Big	cut	mix	War*

When the child has spelt any of the words contained in the foregoing table, he is at the same time required by the monitor to spell all analogous words, though not contained in it, and to give either their meanings or examples of their applications. Thus, after spelling the word *kid*, and telling what a kid is, he is desired to spell and explain the words *bid*, *hid*, *lid* ; after spelling *pig*, in like manner, he is asked about *big*, *dig*, *fig*, *gig*, *jig*,

\* Some of the words in the end of this table have already analogous words in the table, and are only added to complete the line.

*sig.\** To this table two lessons of short sentences are annexed, which differ from the previous ones in

\* Can it be this practice, which the Writer of an article on Education in the Quarterly Review, that has made its appearance since the publication of our first Edition, affects to ridicule under the name of "crambo?" "Professor Pillans," observes the Reviewer in a tone sufficiently querulous, "should have referred his countrymen to DR. BELL'S MANUAL, for the details of the new System of Education, as practised in the schools of the National Society, without any of the *nummeries* which have been added to it by *quacks and pretenders* for the sake of disguising its origin. The amiable Mr. Wood has not improved upon it by adding *the game of crambo*, and the *Rector Emeritus* has fallen short of it," &c. What objection can this Writer possibly have to the method, which we have found in practice so beneficial, of bringing before our pupils, and causing them to spell, words of analogous formation? Not assuredly the rhyming nature of the process, as the name by which he has thought proper to designate it, would intimate; for this jealous panegyrist of Dr. Bell has no objection whatever to the much more copious employment, under the Doctor's system, of such rhyming syllables as the following,

Ba be bi bo bu  
Ha he hi ho hu  
Va ve vi vo vu  
Wa we wi wo wu

Is it, then, the familiarizing of the pupil with *significant* words in actual existence, which alone our objector condemns, and does he think this either less profitable, or less pleasing, than the rhyming of *unmeaning* sounds? Or, if he would speak it out, is it the real ground of his indignation, that any one has presumptuously dared to touch one peg of what he considers an all-perfect system? As an act of justice, however, we think it right to add, that, from the ignorance which the writer has shown with regard to the Sessional School, it appears that his notion of it has been formed neither from personal inspection, nor from our own account, but from an erroneous representation.

this respect, that they contain not only words which are to be found in the present table and those which precede it, but also analogous words, such as those which we have now been mentioning. Take, for instance, the sentence, "*If a man can dig, let him not beg;*" of which none of the words "can," "dig," "let," "not," "beg," are in the table. These lessons are to be explained in the same manner as the preceding ones. Thus, with regard to the one which we have now selected, the child, after being asked the meaning of the words *dig* and *beg*, is next required to explain the whole sentence, and has the propriety of the sentiment pointed out to him.

The last table comprehends principally words of three letters, having a diphthong or silent *e*. The only peculiar remark which occurs upon this table, regards those words, which are similar or nearly similar in sound, but differ in spelling and signification; for example, *you*, *yew*, and *eve*; *to*, *too*, and *two*; *I* *ay*, and *eye*; *so*, *sow*, and *sew*; *be* and *bee*; *toe* and *tow*; *lo* and *low*; *dew* and *due*; *all* and *awl*; *by* and *buy*; *one* and *won*; *see* and *sea*; *oar* and *ore*. On spelling and explaining any one of these words, the monitor is in the constant practice of calling upon his pupil to mention also the others, which have a like pronunciation: and to give him, whether contained in his little book or not, sentences to spell, which may make him more familiar with their distinction; for instance, "*did you see the sea?*" This exercise, which used to be delayed till a more advanced period, is one of which the children are fond, and which

is much easier than we were previously led to imagine.

We have elsewhere mentioned, that no class ought to be allowed to pass from one of those early lessons, of which we have hitherto been treating, into another, without undergoing a personal examination by the master himself. In making this examination, he should be at particular pains to ascertain, that they have not learned merely by rote, and should for this purpose examine them upon the words in the various tables in a different order from that in which they are there presented to them ; or rather pick out these words for them from a different part of their book. This practice is constantly observed in the Sessional School.

## CHAP. XIV.

## READING LESSONS CONTINUED.

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Lisping our syllables we scramble next  
Through moral narrative, or sacred text.—COWPER.

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AFTER the child has become master of the lessons of three letters, he is no longer allowed to linger in the threshold. No more tables of unconnected words, nor even any more detached sentences are presented to him; but he is now, by the perusal of INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE PASSAGES initiated into the real benefit, as well as the practice, of reading. The first passages, indeed, consist of words having not more than four letters: but, without any perceptible injury to the instruction, the children are in this form presented with a pretty long passage on GOD, and with the histories of ADAM and EVE, CAIN and ABEL, and NOAH. We may here remark, that we have found no narratives more pleasing to children, than those which relate to the antediluvian and patriarchal ages. Both the incidents themselves and the style possess a sim-

plicity peculiarly delightful at their years. And, when we tell them that such narratives are to be found in the Bible, they naturally contract a desire to become acquainted with the other contents of that sacred volume.

From the article on God we extract the following paragraph, in order to illustrate our mode of explanation in use at this stage.

" God bids the sun to rise, and he bids it set. He doth give the rain and the dew to wet the soil ; and at his will it is made dry. The heat and the cold come from him. He doth send the snow, and the ice, and the hail ; and, at his word, they melt away. He now bids the tree to put on its leaf, but ere long he will bid the leaf to fade, and make the tree to be bare. He bids the wind to blow, and it is he who bids it to be calm. He sets a door, as it were, on the sea, and says to it, Thus far only must thou come."

On the above passage, the child is asked some such questions as the following : Who bids the sun to " rise ? " What is meant by the sun rising ? \* Where it rises ? When it rises ? What its rising occasions ? Who bids it " set ? " What is meant by setting ? Where it sets ? When it sets ? What its setting occasions ? What is meant by " dew ? " What is meant by " soil ? " What good is done by wetting the soil ? When " the tree puts on its leaf ? " What is meant by the leaf " fading,"

\* It is quite enough that the child, in answer to this question, describe to his monitor the *visible* appearance of the sun " going up." Nothing we conceive would be more *unadvisable* than to tell him at this time, that the sun does not " go up " at all, or to enter into any astronomical discussion with him.

and "the tree being bare?" When this happens? What are "snow," and "ice," and "hail?" What causes them? Who sends the cold? What makes them "melt?" Who sends the heat? What is meant by the word "calm?" What is meant by saying, "He sets a door on the sea?" [Here we may remark in passing, that children come both to understand and to relish a figurative expression much sooner than we might naturally be led to imagine.] When the passage is concluded, the child may be asked, Who does all these things of which he has been reading? and What he thinks of one who can do all these things, and who is so wise and so good as to do them? None of the questions, however, are put in any one form, but vary according to the nature of the answers received. In nothing has the skill of our monitors been more admired by strangers, than in this adaptation.

On the history of CAIN and ABEL, which it is unnecessary here to recite, such questions as the following are asked, in connexion with the preceding article on ADAM and EVE: Who was the first man? Who was the first woman? Who was Adam's wife? Who was Eve's husband? How many sons had Adam? [and here reference is made to Seth, though not mentioned in the little book: which may be cited as an instance of that *collateral* information, which we are in the habit of conveying to the children.] Who was their mother? Who were Cain's brothers? Who were Abel's brothers? Who were Seth's brothers? What sort of a man Cain was? What sort of a man Abel was? What Cain did?

Why he did it? Why the Lord loved Abel? What is meant by the expressions, "envy" and "hate" in the concluding remark? and What it should teach us?

After the account of "the flood," the children are next introduced to lessons with words of five letters, being passages on "the Lord's day," "duty to those who take care of us," "bad words," and "lying." The nature of the examination on such passages is obvious.

Articles are next admitted containing six letters, in which we revert to Scripture history, and make the children acquainted with ABRAM and LOT, and the various incidents which befell them. In questioning them upon all such passages, the examination is not confined, like a task, to the article immediately under consideration, but extends to all matters related in the preceding articles, which may tend to illustrate the present one or to connect the history; and they are even informed and afterwards examined, as we have already hinted, regarding either collateral or similar events, though not mentioned in their book. The monitors are not tied down to any one particular form of questions, nor are the pupils either required or expected to return the answers in the words of the book, or in any other but their own way. They thus, at a very early period, attain the desirable faculties of attention, of forming distinct notions, and of expressing them with facility. As an additional specimen of the style of examination at this period, and of the extent of information, which may be acquired by a



child without any irksome labour, we shall subjoin, as nearly as we can remember, the questions which we ourselves this very day put in presence of strangers, to a very young class, taught by a monitor, without any other aid than the little histories themselves contained in his book, and the previous general training which he had himself undergone. In every one case the questions were correctly answered by one or other of the boys of the class, and in by far the greater number of instances, by the boy to whom the question was first addressed. The few failures, indeed, were almost entirely on the part of children, who had not entered the school at the time when part of the lessons, to which the examination extended, was read by the rest of the class. Nor were the pupils trained with a view to any particular examination, but only in the ordinary course of tuition. The questions were nearly the following :—

Where was Abram born? Who was his father? Who was his wife? Did he always stay in Ur? Why did he leave it? Did God promise him any thing on leaving it? What was the promise? Who came out of Ur along with Abram? [On mentioning Terah, Sarah, and Lot, the child was desired to tell who each of these was : and, though he told that Lot was Abram's *nephew*, it was not accounted superfluous to ask the next child, "Whether Lot had any *uncle*?" to which a correct answer was returned.] Whither did Abram first go on coming out of Ur? How long did he stay there? Whither did he go next? Who went into Canaan along with him? Whether Terah did not go too? Why not?—[It was not considered a sufficient objection to this question, that a former child had mentioned that Abram staid in Haran till the death of Terah : we would here, once for all, remark, that neither the monitor, nor the subsequent examiner, can be too anxious to give the pupil clear notions, and to

prevent him from learning merely by rote ; and that he must be regardless of the ridicule, to which he may perceive himself exposed from strangers ignorant of human nature, by asking the same question again in a different form.] Did Lot go into Canaan along with Abram? Did he continue with Abram ever afterwards? Why not? [On the child answering that "they had not enough of food for their cattle," we farther asked, "Whether there was less food now than before?" To which he answered, "No, but there were more cattle."] What do you mean by strife? What was the nature of the strife? Who put an end to the strife? What did he say? What place did Lot chuse? What do you mean by a "plain?" Why was it called "the plain of Jordan?" Why did Lot prefer that place? Did he live there in the town or in the country? In what town? What was the first remarkable thing which happened to him there? Who took him a prisoner? Who came to help him? How did Abram know that Lot was in danger? What did he do on hearing it? [The child, in this case repeated the account in the book, that "he armed "all those that were of his house," on which we thought it necessary to ask, what she meant by this, to which the girl replied that "he gave them things to fight with."] What did Abram bring back? Who met him when he was coming back? Was the King of Salem any thing else besides a king? What did Abram give him? [The child answered, "a tenth part of the "spoils." On which we farther asked, "what he meant by the spoils?" To which he answered, "The goods that he had taken "back from the kings."] Did Abram take any of the goods to himself? Did any body offer him them? Who? What answer did he make? What was the next remarkable thing which happened at Sodom? Who was first told that this was to happen? Why was Abram so favoured? What did he do on hearing it? What did the Lord answer? Were ten just men found in it? What was the consequence? Who were saved?

It ought to be particularly remarked, that none of the children have books at home. The books which they use are all the property of the school, and remain there. The whole information, therefore, which they communicated in answer to the

above questions, had been acquired from their reading in school, and the previous examinations of their young teacher. We do not mention this circumstance as a disadvantage. On the contrary, we are persuaded that, had the above been required of them in the form of tasks to be learned at home, in precise words from a catechism, it would not only have been much more irksome and laborious, but would not have been nearly so well done.

To render, however, the explanation of any general benefit, it is not enough that the child be able to communicate, through the assistance which he has received from his monitor, the *results* of what he has been reading. He must be also taught, as he goes along, to give as nearly as possible, the precise meaning of each sentence, and of every more difficult word. As a specimen of this, we shall subjoin part of an actual examination, to which we also to-day most successfully subjected one of the very young classes. One of the paragraphs, on which they were thus examined, was the following :

"The history of Abraham, of which you had a portion in your former little book, is one, that you should be sure to read with great care. This holy man, *in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed*, is in your Bible again and again called by that highest of all titles, 'The friend of God;' and he is there held out as a pattern for all God's people to follow. You ought then to study well his life, and try to do after his example, if you would wish also to have God for *your friend*."

Upon this passage the children were asked :

What is meant by "a history?" And by "a portion?" What former little book," they spoke of? And what it is "to read

with great care?" What a "holy man" is? Who is here meant by "this holy man?" How all the nations of the earth were to be blessed in Abraham? [The child, to whom this question was put, answered, "By means of Jesus Christ." We then asked what Jesus Christ had to do with Abraham? To which he replied that he was of the family of Abraham. We asked if Christ was Abraham's son in the same manner that Isaac and Ishmael were? To which he answered that "he was his son's son's son's son," evidently meaning that he was of a remote generation.] What is the "Bible?" What is meant by "again and again?" [To which the child answered "over and over."] What is meant by a "title?" [To which the answer was, "a great name."] What was the title by which Abraham was called? "He is there held out as a pattern,"—what do you mean by "there?" What is "a pattern?" Who are "God's people?" What is meant by "studying well Abraham's life?" What is it to "do after his example?" [To which the answer was, "To do as he did."] How may we have God for our friend?

The Second Book, besides carrying the child forward in Scripture History, through the remarkable incidents in the lives of ISAAC, JACOB, ESAU, and JOSEPH, presents him with much interesting as well as useful instruction in the department of Natural History: such as an account of *the dog*, its fidelity, its various species, and the purposes to which they are applied; *the horse*, with the various methods of catching and taming it; *the sheep*, *the cow*, and *hog*, with the various uses to which their flesh, milk, skin, wool, horns, bones, gristles, fat, blood, &c. are applied; *the swallow*, *the herring*, and *salmon*, with their migrations and other peculiarities; *the oyster*, and particularly that very valuable species of it, *the pearl oyster*, with some account of the *pearl fishery*; *the bee*, with the wonderful skill which it displays in making honey and

wax ; *the caterpillar*, and particularly *the silk-worm*, with the various changes through which it passes, and the purposes to which the silk is applied ; *the oak*, and *fir*, with the uses which are made of their timber, and bark,—of the acorns, galls, apples, (as they are called,) and saw-dust of the oak, and juice of the fir ; *the cotton*, *corn*, *flax*, and *hemp* plants, with their important uses, and the various processes and hands, through which they must pass, before they are finally converted to their respective uses ; *the seeds of plants* in general, with the wonderful provisions which have been made for their security, their turning themselves into their proper position in the earth, and their propagation ; *minerals* in general, with their several species and respective uses ; *the manufactures of pins and glass*, and the various purposes to which the latter article is applied ; together with other *miscellaneous information*, of a kind interesting to young minds, and calculated to impress them with a due sense of the blessings of education, such as descriptions of *savage manners*, &c. Every one of these passages the children of the Sessional School are taught not only to read but to understand. Hence the fondness, which they acquire, for reading all other books, from which they may obtain similar information ; and hence, in a great measure, that extent of knowledge, which has so often astonished the visitors of the school, and been called in question by those, who have never witnessed the effects of similar training. How, indeed, was it possible, that such results, (and surely they are most important ones,) could ever

be produced by a system, which paid little or no attention, and of which it is still the boast of *some* of its admirers, that it does pay no attention, to any thing but mere sounds, cadences, and inflexions of the voice?

As the pupils advance through their Second Book, the nature of the explanations required of them gradually varies. In the early stages, it is, of course, absolutely necessary to point out to them many things, which they cannot fail to notice for themselves at a later period; such, for example, as the words for which the pronouns are substituted: while, in the more advanced stages, higher and more general information may be communicated to them, regarding both words and things, than would be at all profitable at an earlier one. In order to illustrate this observation, we shall present our readers with the method of explanation employed with regard to two passages in the Second Book; one towards the beginning, the other towards the close.

As the nature of the questions on the articles of Natural History is in general sufficiently obvious, we have in preference selected, as our first specimen, the examination applicable to an interesting little poem of Campbell's, which has been annexed to the account of the Dog. The poem itself, (which we have found it necessary to transcribe, in order that the examination may be understood,) is as follows:

**"THE POOR HARPER'S LAMENT FOR HIS DOG.**

" Poor dog! he was faithful and kind, to be sure,  
 " And his love it was constant, although I was poor :  
 " When the sour-looking folks sent me heartless away,  
 " I had always a friend in my poor dog Tray.

" When the road was so dark, and the night was so cold,  
 " And Pat and his dog were grown weary and old,  
 " How snugly we slept in my old coat of gray,  
 " And he licked me for kindness—my poor dog Tray.

" Though my wallet was scant, I thought of his case,  
 " Nor refused my last crust to his pitiful face ;  
 " But he died at my feet in a cold winter day,  
 " And I played a sad lament for my poor dog Tray.

" Where now shall I go, poor, forsaken, and blind,  
 " Can I find one to guide me, so faithful and kind ?  
 " To my sweet native village, so far, far away,  
 " I can never more return with my poor dog Tray."

As the child proceeds, he is asked, What is a " harper ?" What is a " lament ?" What is meant by " faithful ?" Who was faithful ? To whom was he faithful ?—[Such questions as the two last would, at a later stage, be clearly quite unnecessary, unless where there is any reason to suspect inattention.] What do you mean by his love being " constant ?" What is meant by " the sour-looking folks," and by the harper being " heartless ?" Who was his " friend ?" Who was " Pat ?" Why is he called Pat ? How did he and his dog sleep ? What is meant by " snugly ?"—[To this question we not uncommonly receive the answer, " coziely ;"\*

\* The Scottish word for snugly. See Jamieson.

which, however it may shock the more refined organs of those, who, though affecting to understand and to be friends of our system, yet sneer at what they are pleased to term our "vulgarity," is, we own, the very answer which, to our less delicate ears, (*proh pudor!*) is, *from such pupils*, by far the most acceptable.] How did Tray show his "kindness?" What do you mean by a "wallet?" and by its being "scant?" What is meant by "I thought of his case?" What did Pat do in consequence? What at last became of Tray? And what did Pat do on the occasion? What is meant by "forsaken?" How was the harper forsaken? What is meant by a "village?" and by a "native village?"—[With a more advanced class, we should, on occasion of these two last questions, have asked the difference between a *town*, a *village*, and a *hamlet*; the name given to the *inhabitant of a village*; the meaning of the words, *natal*, *nativity*, &c.] At the conclusion, the children are called upon to give an abstract of the whole story in their own language.

The other passage, which we shall select from this Book, for the illustration of our method, is the introduction to the article on glass, which is as follows:—

"You have already, in the course of this little work, read of  
"several very extraordinary changes, which human art and ingenuity have been able to make upon natural productions.  
"You have heard of the shroud of a worm in its lifeless state,  
"of the fruit of one plant, and the fibres of another, being all  
"converted into articles of dress for human beings. But per-



“ haps none of these transformations has surprised you more than that which you are now to hear of. Would you believe, that so clear and beautiful an article as glass, could be made out of so gross a substance as sand? Yet it is the fact, that glass is made by mixing sand with the ashes of certain burnt plants, and exposing them to a strong fire.”

On this passage the child, besides describing generally how glass is made, is asked, What is meant by “ art?” What is meant by “ human art and ingenuity?” What are “ natural productions?” Can you tell me any of them? What is a “ shroud?” What worm has its shroud “ converted into an article of dress?” Can you tell me the various changes through which that worm passes? Do you know any of the uses to which silk is put? What plant is it of which “ the *fruit* is converted into an article of dress?” Are there more than one kind of cotton plant? Which is the best? Do you know any thing that is made of cotton? Can you tell me any plant of which “ the *fibres* are converted into an article of dress?” Do you know any piece of dress that is made of flax? Do you remember the various hands through which the flax must pass before it becomes a shirt? What do you mean by “ transformations?” What is meant by a “ gross substance?” &c.

The above examination will illustrate the manner in which the information communicated in preceding lessons is made to bear upon those which follow. We have no doubt, also, that it will be referred to by our opponents, as an instance of what they are pleased to term the absurdly desultory nature of our

examinations. We shall doubtless be asked what have the transformations of flax to do with the metamorphosis of sand into glass? Could not the latter manufacture be understood without any reference to the former? This is all very true. But if we would have the information, which we communicate, not merely to be learned as a lesson to-day and forgotten to-morrow, but to be permanently retained, and as it were incorporated with our pupils, —we must frequently recur to it, and eagerly seize every future incidental opportunity, which such allusions as those contained in the passage before us obviously offer for this purpose. Such a practice may not be highly valued by those, who know only the mode of teaching by formal and prescribed tasks; but it is to it in a great measure the Sessional School is indebted for its success. It is to this practice alone we can refer, in answer to the thousands of inquiries, that are daily made about “the secret,” by which its pupils acquire and retain so extensive a range of information. On the foregoing examination, it will also be remarked, that though it goes beyond those which are employed at an earlier period, it is not yet carried to the same extent as at a more advanced stage. For example, we should at a later period, have asked the difference between “art” and nature,” between “art” and science,” and between the adjectives “artificial” and “artful,” with other questions of a similar kind.

## CHAP. XV.

## READING OF THE MORE ADVANCED CLASSES.

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Advancing still in Nature's maze, we trace,  
 In dens and burning plains, her savage race :  
 Man crowns the scene—a world of wonders new,  
 A moral world, that well demands our view.  
 Our volumes paint man's state; ere yet endued  
 With knowledge,—man, poor, ignorant, and rude ;  
 Then, as his state improves, their pages swell,  
 And all its cares, and all its comforts tell.—CRABBE.

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AFTER finishing the Second Book, the children, besides Scripture, (which as will afterwards be seen, is in regular use in all the higher classes), read the "National School Collection," originally compiled, like all the other books of the series, for the use of this seminary. This compilation consists of Religious and Moral Instruction, a selection of Fables, descriptions of Animals,\* Places, Manners, &c.

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\* The animals principally described in this Collection are those which retain their wild state: those previously treated of in the Second Book were domestic animals.

Historical Passages, and other useful and interesting information for youth. As the pupils advance in this book, each passage, besides being fully explained in all its bearings upon the subject in question, is subjected to a still more minute analysis, than had been practised in the former stages, with the view formerly explained of giving them the full command of their own language, and such general information as the passage may suggest.

Take, for example, the following passage extracted from "Wakefield's Juvenile Travellers," which, as well as the "Family Tour," by the same authoress, we would recommend for introduction into all libraries for schools or young families.

#### SWITZERLAND.

"How shall I describe to you the vast variety of wonderful  
"and romantic prospects, that we have seen, since we came into  
"Switzerland? These charming views are varied with moun-  
"tains, whose snowy heads seem to reach the skies; craggy rocks  
"and steep precipices, with foaming torrents gushing from the  
"crevices in their sides, delightfully intermixed with beautiful  
"valleys, adorned with groves of fir, beech, and chesnut; clear  
"lakes, rapid rivers, cataracts, and bridges of one arch, extend-  
"ing a surprising width from rock to rock. The cultivated parts  
"of the mountains are covered with villages, and scattered cot-  
"tages; and then the insides of the cottages are so very neat,  
"and look so comfortable, that I should like to live in some of  
"them that are situate in the most delightful spots, were it not  
"for the dread of being swallowed up in one of those enormous  
"masses of snow, that frequently roll from the tops of the moun-  
"tains, and destroy every thing in their way. In going to the  
"tops of the high mountains of Switzerland, you may enjoy all  
"the seasons of the year in the same day," &c.

After reading the passage, the children are required to recapitulate, in their own language, the substance of what they have read, and describe the peculiar character of the Swiss scenery,—the internal appearance of the dwellings of the peasantry,—the particular dangers to which they are exposed,—the variety of climate and its cause,—and to mention any other scenery of a similar kind, which is nearer home; such, for example, as the Highlands of Scotland. But, as the passage is read in school, not merely for the purpose of communicating to them the direct information, which it contains, however interesting in itself, but, like all the other passages which they read, to render them familiar with their own language,—to act as a vehicle for the communication of general knowledge,—and as a field for examination on that which has formerly been communicated,—they are also called upon to answer some such questions as the following, or at least as many of them as the pupil is not already sufficiently acquainted with, or the time specially set apart for such examination will permit.

What is Switzerland? Name its boundaries. What is the literal meaning of the word “describe?” What does the termination *scribe* denote? Mention some of its other compounds with their various meanings; [Here the pupil will give and explain the words *inscribe*, *prescribe*, *subscribe*, *superscribe*, *transcribe*, *circumscribe*, *proscribe*, *ascribe*.] Do you know any word from the same root which signifies a *writing*? [Here he will mention *Scripture*.] In what sense is this word now generally used? Do you

know a word which signifies that which is *written by the hand*? [*manuscript*.] Do you know any other part of a word besides *scribe*, which signifies to *write* or *describe*? [*graph*.] Give and explain to me some of its derivatives and compounds [such as *graphic*, *paragraph*, *telegraph*, *chirography*, *geography*.] What is meant by *variety*? From what verb does it come? Mention some of the other words derived from this verb. Does the word *wonderful* take any other form? [*wondrous*.] Could you give me any other word varied in the same manner? [such as *plentiful*, *plenteous*; *bountiful*, *bounteous*.] What then does the termination *ous* denote? Could you give me any word meaning *wonderful* which is applied only to any thing out of the course of nature? [*miraculous*.] Can you give me any verb from the same root? [*admire*.] What is the meaning of "romantic?" From what noun does it come? What is a "prospect?" What does the syllable *pro* signify? Give some other examples of this [such as *progress*, *project*.] What does the termination *spect* denote? Mention some other words from this root [such as *spectator*, *spectacle*, *aspect*, *expect*, *inspect*, *circumspect*, *retrospect*, *suspect*.] With reference to the word "seen," can you tell me any word which signifies "that can be seen?" [*visible*] and the opposite? Can you give me any word from the same root with these which signifies *sight*? [*vision*] or *to go to see*? [*visit*] or *to go to see again*? [*revisit*.] Do you know any word which originally signifies *to see forward*, but is used figuratively? [*provide*.] What adjectives come from that root? What is the difference

between *provident* and *providential*? What word is formed by contraction from *provident*? [*prudent*.] What then does a *prudent man* properly mean? With reference to the word “came,” can you tell me any termination that signifies *to come* [*vene* or *vent*.] Give me examples, [*convene, intervene, advent, adventure, event, invent, prevent*.] Mention some of the principal “mountains” of Switzerland. What is the difference between a “mountain” and a hill? What is the adjective from *mountain*? What is an *inhabitant of a mountainous district* called? What does the verb “mount” signify? Has it any compounds? [*surmount, amount*.] What does a *mountebank* mean? Why? What are “craggy rocks?” What are “precipices?” Why are they so called? Do you know any other words from the same root? What are “torrents?” and “crevices?” With reference to the word “sides,” can you give me any word that signifies *belonging to the side*? [*lateral*.] Mention any other words from the same root [*collateral, equilateral, multilateral*.] What is meant by *intermixed*? What does the former part of that word signify? Give some other examples of its application, [such as *interval, intermediate, intercede*.] What does the first syllable of the word “beautiful” mean in our language? What is the corresponding feminine word? What is the verb from it? [*embellish*.] Does “beautiful” ever take any other termination? What are “valleys?” What are “lakes?” What are they called in Scotland? and in Ireland? Mention the principal lakes in Swit-

zerland, describing at the same time their respective situations. Mention also in like manner some of its principal "rivers." Can you give any diminutive from the word "river?" What are "cataracts?" Can you give any other words for them? [*waterfalls, cascades.*] What parts of words in composition signify "one?" [*uni, mono.*] Give examples, [such as *uniform, unicorn, monotony, monosyllable.*] What is the literal meaning of the word "extending?" What does the first syllable signify? Can you give any other example of its application, [such as *extract, expel.*] What does the syllable *tend* signify? Mention some others of its compounds, [such as *distend, pretend.*] Do you know any noun from the simple root? [*tent.*] Why is a tent so called? What do you mean by "cultivated?" What word expresses the cultivation of fields? or the cultivation of gardens? What is the meaning of the word *occult*? Whence does it derive this meaning? [From seeds covered over in tillage.] What are "villages?" What name is given to a smaller collection of houses? What is an inhabitant of a village called? What do you mean by "scattered cottages?" What is the name given to the inhabitant of a cottage? What is the difference between a "cottage" and a *hut*? Could you substitute any other word for "insides?" What is the opposite of *interior*? What does "very" literally mean? [*Truly.*] Can you mention any other words from the same root? [*Verily, verity, veracity, verify, aver.*] What do you mean by "dread?" What adjective comes from this root? What other words denote *dreadful*, [*frightful, terrible, formida-*



ble.] What do you mean by "enormous." What name is given to "enormous masses of snow rolling from the tops of the mountains?" [*avalanches.*] Could you give any other word employed to signify "tops of mountains?" [*summits,*] or any other words from the same root, [such as *consummate, sum.*] What are "all the seasons of the year?" What occasions the diversity of seasons? How can they all be anywhere enjoyed on the same day? Can you give me any part of a word which expresses "all" in composition? [*omni.*] Give examples, [*omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnivorous.*] What is the adjective from "year?" Give another word for "yearly?" Express a *yearly payment* in one word? and the *receiver* of this payment? also a *book detailing the events of a year?* and the *writer* of this book? Is the word "same" ever compounded with any other to make it emphatical? [*self-same.*] Is there any other word which expresses "same" emphatically? [*identical.*] Mention some other parts of speech from the same root, [*identity, identify.*] Can you give any word which means *belonging to the "day?"* [*diurnal,*] *lasting for a day?* [*ephemeral,*] *a book containing each day's transactions?* [*diary or journal,*] any other words from the same root with *journal?* [such as *journey, adjourn, sojourn, journeyman.*]

Such is a specimen of our mode of examination in its fullest form. The passages employed for this purpose on public days, are always selected by one of the visitors, from any of the school-books, and sometimes from books brought by themselves, without reference to the circumstance, whether the class

have read that individual passage or not. On all occasions, the examination is not equally minute. In the younger classes, many of the more difficult questions are not asked, as being yet beyond the capacity of the pupils, while, in the elder, a great many of the more simple ones are, for the most part, omitted, as being already sufficiently familiar. On the public days, (which are twice a-week,\*) every stranger present, without exception, is invited to put such questions as occur to himself, of which invitation it very rarely indeed happens, that some one does not do us the favour to accept. Hence the actual acquirements and capacities of the children are put to a much more fiery trial, than perhaps in any other seminary. When, therefore, we consider the strong tendency, which has existed for years past, to turn our proceedings into ridicule, and to expose to the public every slip which every individual pupil has happened to make, the Directors may surely, without any extravagant boast, be entitled to congratulate themselves on a result, which they would certainly not have dared to anticipate. With re-

\* MONDAY and SATURDAY. The school was formerly at all times open to strangers. This was at length found a very serious interruption to business. Still, however, the Directors for years delayed pronouncing any order upon the subject, in the expectation, that, as the novelty went off, the influx of visitors would abate, an expectation which, however, has never been realized. The present order, it is right to mention, is rigidly adhered to, it having been found quite impossible to make any exceptions whatever, without injury to the school, and also on account of the peculiarly delicate situation, in which those in attendance would be placed, if they enjoyed any dispensing power in this

gard to the accounts, too, which have been published, whether by friends or adversaries, of the nature of the examinations, which have actually taken place in the Sessional School, it will be kept in view, that these examinations were conducted, not only by those connected with the school, but also by strangers, and hence have a much more desultory appearance than they otherwise would have possessed. Many of the questions are such as would not have been put at all by those connected with the school. Many of them arose, too, out of answers previously received from the scholars, which do not appear in these accounts.

We are aware, that an opinion has sometimes been entertained by those, who know the system merely by report, and especially by erroneous and prejudiced report, that, however it may be calculated to give the pupils the meaning of *words*, it does not enable them more readily to comprehend the general *scope* of the passages which they read. With regard to this matter, it is now very unnecessary to

respect. Scarcely a day passes, in which, both at home, and in the school, we have not multitudes of applications for admission, in favour of those, who consider their own particular situation to afford a ground of exemption. On the public days, every circumstance connected either with the actual proficiency of the children, or with the steps which have led to it, is readily exhibited and explained to inquirers. Any one, therefore, who may spend a whole day in Market Street, will see the method of education in its progress from beginning to end. Any intelligent teacher who may pass there the Saturday, the Sunday evening and the Monday, will we think, be thereby enabled to form a pretty correct notion of its principles.

trouble our readers with any of those arguments, which the subject so naturally suggests. We may confidently appeal to the multitudes who have been witnesses of our proceedings, and particularly to those who have taken the trouble to examine our pupils with this view, whether they have often elsewhere met with children of their time of life, who entered more completely into the spirit of what they read, or could give a more accurate and clear account of it to others. One individual, both professionally and personally well qualified to judge in such a matter, has, on different occasions, been at particular pains to satisfy himself on this point, in consequence of doubts which he acknowledged to have once entertained upon the subject, arising from the representations he had received. On one of these occasions, in particular, he selected a passage of Dr. Johnson, on "the varying aspect of nature, as well adapted to man's love of novelty," and examined upon its import, the least, though certainly by no means the lowest, boy in the class. As no notes of this conversation were taken at the time, we regret that we have it not in our power to present our readers with any detail of it. The examinations, however, on one sentence we *may* notice, because of this we have a most distinct recollection. The sentence is as follows: "Our sense of delight is in a great measure comparative, and arises at once from the sensations which we feel, and those which we remember." On this sentence the boy was first asked by the examiner, "What he meant by our sense of delight being comparative?" to which

he answered, "We enjoy health a great deal better "when we have been sick." He was further asked, "Whether he could put into other language the "expression, 'the sensations which we feel, and " 'those which we remember?'" to which he replied, "Present and past sensations," though the question, however pertinent, was one which had not been put in the school before. On a subsequent occasion, when the same intelligent individual had the goodness to put the class to a similar trial, he expressed, in the strongest manner, his high satisfaction, and his conviction, that what he had himself witnessed on his various visits, afforded a triumphant refutation of the objections, which he had recently seen urged by an anonymous writer in one of the Journals. This conviction was still more strongly confirmed, by the result of a visit, which he paid on the following evening to the Sunday School in Market Street.

We are well aware, (as we have repeatedly hinted,) that it is by means of such visits and examinations only, the mode of instruction can be rightly understood and appreciated. No statement can give any conception of the incidental circumstances, which frequently give rise to the most useful questions, and of the readiness of the answers which are returned. Very many, accordingly, have been the instances, in which those who entered the school with the most unfavourable prejudices, have left it with the strongest impressions of the utility of the method. Within the last few weeks, this has oc-

curring in many cases with regard to teachers, who, during the period of vacation in their own schools, have visited our seminary. To such instances it gives us much pleasure to refer, not merely as reflecting credit on the mode of instruction, but as reflecting far higher credit upon the schoolmasters of Scotland; whom, from all we have seen of them, we are disposed to regard as a class of the most liberal-minded, as well as intelligent and highly useful men.

As soon as the mode of initiatory instruction, which had thus been introduced, came into full operation, it was found, that a much larger proportion of the pupils were enabled to read and understand the most advanced school-book of the series, than had at all been anticipated at the time of its publication. It became desirable, therefore, to furnish the scholars with an additional book, which might afford them more interest and information, than could be expected from the continued perusal of those, with which they were already familiar. This *desideratum*, therefore, has now been supplied, by the publication of "Instructive Extracts, comprising Religious and Moral Instruction, Natural History, Elementary Science, Accounts of Remarkable Persons, Places, Manners, Arts, and Incidents, with a selection of Passages from the British Poets." In the execution of this work, we were in a great measure guided by the following considerations. Keeping in view the age of the children, whose benefit was on the present occasion contem-

plated,—the previous training which their minds had undergone,—and the extent of information which, under this discipline, they had already acquired and displayed,—we were induced to think, that the work now called for, in order to be of material service to such pupils, should be of a somewhat higher cast than those which preceded it; and might well embrace instructive subjects, which would have been extremely ill adapted, either to the understanding or the taste of more infantine and less practised minds. No articles have been studied with greater avidity, have been more thoroughly understood, or, we trust, will be found more beneficial than those which treat of the mechanical powers, and other elementary science. As a specimen of the method of examination employed in this department, we annex the following:

What is necessary to put a body in motion? What property of the body is it which renders force necessary in such a case? Will a body go quicker of itself? or slower? or stop? Why then does a marble rolled along the floor first go slower, and at length stop altogether? On what two circumstances does the force of a moving body depend? How then can you increase the force of the same body? If two bodies move quite round the same centre within the same time, have they the same velocity? or which has the greater? Do you know any mechanical power that acts upon this principle? What is a LEVER? How many kinds of lever are there? What is the first kind? Can you give me any examples of its application? In what proportion is

power gained by the use of this lever? In raising a heavy coal with a poker, whether will it be easier done by applying the hand near the ribs, or at the extremity of the poker? Why? If the arms of a just balance be each divided into the same number of equal parts, how many ounces at the 3d division from the fulcrum on one side, will be balanced by 9 ounces at the 2d on the other? [or any similar question which a stranger may propose.] What method of detecting false balances does this suggest? Do you know any kind of balance formed upon this principle, by which you may weigh all articles with one weight? Describe the *steelyard*. Can you give me any instance of a double lever of the first kind? [*scissors*, for example.] What is the second lever? Can you give any example of it? In what proportion is power gained by the use of this lever? In moving a heavy door, how will you do it with the greatest facility? Why? Can you give any example of a double lever of the 2d kind? [*nut-crackers*, for example.] What is the 3d kind of lever? How is power affected by it? Why? Can you give any example? If you wish to raise bodies to a greater height than the lever can accomplish, what other mechanical powers must be resorted to? What do you mean by the WHEEL AND AXLE? On what principle does it operate? Can you give any example of it? How is its power increased? In drawing up water from a well by means of this power, does the operation grow easier or more difficult as it advances? Why? What is a PULLEY? Is any power gained by employing a *fixed*



pulley? What is the use of it? Is any power gained by the use of a moveable pulley? or what? On what principle does the moveable pulley act? Can you illustrate the double velocity of the moving power in this case? What in this case supports the weight? If two such pulleys be combined, what power will be gained? If six, what will be the result? What circumstance, in a certain degree, disturbs all the calculations with regard to the precise power gained by this and other machinery?

The manner in which our pupils *read* has frequently excited the admiration of strangers. In this respect they are obviously exposed to extreme disadvantages; and, if these have in any degree been conquered, it is principally to be ascribed to that intellectual training, which, as we have already said, is the principal source of all good reading. In point of *pronunciation*, indeed, it is not to be expected that they should read with the correctness of Englishmen, or even of their own countrymen, who live in what is called good society. Yet, even in this respect, they have received high commendation from our visitors, (especially English visitors,) who have expressed the greatest surprise at the comparative exemption of the reading in our advanced pupils from provincial dialect. Nay, this very circumstance has sometimes been made a matter of blame, under the erroneous notion, that attention to pronunciation must have occupied a far greater share of our attention than it has actually done. For ourselves, we are of opinion, that, though an accurate pronunciation is by no means of

the same importance to the children of our school, as to those in a higher walk of life, it ought, even among them, by no means to be disregarded. In the first place, it is clearly of great consequence, in order to facilitate the acquisition of reading in a large school, that some *uniform* method of pronunciation should be adopted, and, if so, it is surely better that the one adopted should be, if possible, a correct one. But, besides this recommendation, no one can tell of how much importance an accurate pronunciation may prove, even to children of the lower ranks, in after life. We do not here allude to any change, which may afterwards take place with regard to their station in society, but merely to the circumstances, which may be connected with a continuance in their present station. How many masters and mistresses, from old age, or from blindness, have been under the necessity of applying to their servants to read to them, and have, at length, been compelled to abandon this desirable expedient, from no other cause, than the disgust arising from the coarse and vulgar pronunciation of the reader! In nothing, however, has the reading of our pupils been more commended, than with regard to the management of the natural pauses and the emphases, which has not escaped the attention of the most scientific teachers, and is entirely to be ascribed to the pains bestowed upon the cultivation of their understanding, for which no artificial system of rules can at all compensate.

In teaching to read, it is of consequence that the youngest classes, before quitting their early tables,

which are to be made the foundation of their future reading, should be able to pronounce all the words with great accuracy. But with regard to the middle stages, we are by no means friendly to detaining the class in a particular lesson, till all the individuals who compose it shall be able to exhibit the unnatural aspect (sometimes presented at public examinations,) of reading with the same facility and elegance, as the best scholars in the most advanced classes. This naturally degenerates into an exercise more of mere memory, than of reading properly so called, and unnecessarily limits the field for the communication of useful knowledge.

In the Sessional School, the children are now taught to *spell* from their ordinary reading lessons, employing for this purpose both the short and the long words as they occur. Under the former practice in the school, of selecting merely what are longer and apparently more difficult words, we very frequently found the pupils unable to spell the shorter and more common ones, which we still find by no means uncommon in those, who come to us from some other schools. By making the pupil, too, spell the lesson, just as he would write it, he is less liable to fall in future life into the common error of substituting the word *their* for *there*, and others of a similar kind. In former times, the practice prevailed of telling a long story about every word which was spelt: thus, in spelling the word exemplification, for instance, even a child in the higher classes used to say, "*e x*, ex; *e m*, em, exem; *p l i*, ple, exemple;

"*fi*, *fe*, *exemplefe*; *ca*, *ca*, *exemplefeca*; *tion*,  
" *shun*, *exemplefecashun*; six syllables, and ac-  
" cented on the penult syllable." This, obviously, as  
a general practice, was a great waste of time, and is  
we believe almost universally exploded. In our own  
school, the pupil, in spelling, merely names the let-  
ters, making a marked pause at the end of each  
syllable. If the child too be required to pronounce  
the word correctly, there can be no necessity in  
every case for the *technicalism*, (if we may so  
speak,) of naming the accented syllable, more than  
for specifying the particular sound of each vowel in  
the word.

## CHAP. XVI.

DAILY RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

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And now, he cried, I shall be pleased to get  
Beyond the Bible,—there I puzzle yet.

CRABBE.

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WE formerly described the Religious Instruction given to the children attending the *Sunday* Schools, connected with the Edinburgh Parochial Institutions. But if we would indeed render this instruction effectual to their benefit, and make it become as it were incorporated with themselves,—“grow “with their growth, and strengthen with their “strength,”—something more than weekly training is absolutely essential for this purpose. Every suitable opportunity must be seized for throwing light upon the truths, and enforcing the obligations of religion. Nor only so: we must not merely avail ourselves of the occasions that offer, but must, particularly in the education of the lower classes, whose means of domestic instruction are frequently

but scanty, specially set apart a portion of every day for this purpose.

The business of the Sessional School, as we have elsewhere noticed, both commences and concludes every day with prayer. All the books used in the school contain a large proportion of Religious and Moral Instruction. The earliest of them are in a great measure composed of little incidents selected from Scripture History. From the time that the children are able to read it with tolerable ease, the Bible itself is put into their hands; it is thenceforward read as a part of their daily instructions, along with any other exercises which may be required of them; and, while they remain in the school, it never ceases to form an important part of their studies. It is not there, as in many other schools, dropt when the children advance a certain length; neither can they ever *boast* that they are "now out of the Bible." In the very highest class of the school, which is most occupied with other studies, the Bible also is, by means of a proper husbandry of time, most read. In that class as well as the one immediately below it, a systematic reading of Scripture has been adopted, which has been found highly beneficial in making its different parts bear upon and illustrate one another. On Monday, one chapter at least is read from the historical books of the Old Testament; on Tuesday, a chapter or more of the Gospels or Acts of the Apostles; on Thursday, a portion of the Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes; on Friday, a portion of the Epistles; on Wednesday, (which is the only day

on which Scripture itself is not read,) an hour is devoted to examination on the Catechism and Scripture Biography; and on Saturday, the children are examined on the whole Scripture Reading of the week. It is very remarkable how often the passages of Scripture read in this way, in the course of a week, throw light upon each other, the passages read in the Gospels being fulfillments of the predictions read in the Prophets, and the passages in the Epistles, bearing reference to customs or incidents recorded in those, which were read from the Historical Books.\* This method, accordingly, has been found by the children both most interesting and instructive. The nature of the examination on Scripture will, we trust, be easily understood, from what has been already said regarding explanations in general, and particularly regarding those which are given in the Market Street Sunday School. One thing only we would remark on this subject, that the examinations on the Bible are strictly confined to such, as may enable the pupils to understand the passages read, or augment their religious knowledge. Questions regarding orthography, grammar, and the general meaning of the language, are invariably reserved for those other books, which always accompany the reading of the Bible.

\* As a striking instance of this coincidence, we mentioned in our second Edition that in the very week in which we revised this part of it, the children happened to read, in regular course, the 110th Psalm, and 12th Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel; in which last we have an account of the manner in which our Lord, by means of that Psalm, confounded his adversaries. Since that time many not less remarkable coincidences have occurred.

After perusing this statement, our readers will hardly be prepared to expect, that a charge should ever have been brought against us, of neglecting religious education in our daily school. Yet such a charge we know has sometimes been preferred. At other times it has only been *insinuated*, that, where there is so much other knowledge, there must be a neglect of religious instruction. To those who know any thing about our school, we confidently appeal, whether they have ever seen any seminary, in which this highest and most important of all instruction has been carried to a greater extent. On the other hand, we are quite prepared to expect, that the above exposition of the system of religious instruction practised in this seminary, will lead others to doubt whether any thing else is there learned. These also we would invite to visit the school and judge for themselves, whether they have ever seen children of the same age, and placed in similar circumstances, reading with more understanding, or displaying more general knowledge.



## CHAP. XVII.

## ON GRAMMAR.

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To speak and write without absurdity the language of one's own country is commendable in *persons of all stations*, and to some indispensably necessary; and to this purpose I would recommend above all things, the having a grammar of our mother-tongue taught in our schools.—TATLER.

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THE importance of a knowledge of the principles of GRAMMAR, in order to render ourselves masters of our own language, as well as of any other, will now hardly be disputed. It cannot fail, therefore, to be surprising, that this highly useful branch of education should have been so long neglected, and that the suggestion contained in the motto of this chapter should not have much earlier come into general adoption. It seems to have been thought, that, in the education of the higher classes of society, this was sufficiently provided for, by the knowledge which they received of the dead languages, and that for the lower ranks of the people it was an unnecessary accomplishment. Such a notion in both

views was obviously quite erroneous. Our language, like every other, has a grammar, however simple, of its own, which an acquaintance with universal grammar, or with that of any other language, can never supply. This was accordingly at length so strongly felt, that, in all our English schools in this quarter for children of the higher classes, grammar has for years past formed a part of the education of the pupil. In *some* too of our parish schools it has also at length found a place. And, in truth, in some respects this knowledge is of no less importance to persons of all ranks, than *orthography itself*, which all are agreed should be universally and carefully taught. Its necessity in order to enable a man either to speak or write with correctness, is sufficiently obvious. But its value in assisting us to a right understanding of what we read, may not immediately be so apparent. We were not ourselves, by any means, fully aware of the obstacle in this respect, which an ignorance of the principles of grammatical construction may occasion, until it came in our way on our first attempts to explain to the children the passages which they read in school. Every sentence at all inverted or involved was found a stumbling block. We were particularly struck with a remark of one of the most intelligent and best educated of our evening scholars, who had previously been instructed in grammar according to the ordinary systematic method, and could once repeat all the rules of syntax with the most precise verbal accuracy, but had never, till he came to our school, at all understood their application, or been

able to discern their use. This lad, in pointing out some of the advantages, which he had acquired by his attendance on our evening school, mentioned among other things, that he had never rightly understood the metre translation of the psalms, until the acquaintance, which he there received with the principles of grammatical construction, enabled him to turn them into the ordinary prose arrangement; and that the like was the case with him in some degree with respect to sermons and other things.

With the utmost anxiety to remove the only remaining obstacle, which stood in our way, in our attempt to render the education of the children committed to us somewhat more rational, we were at the same time much disposed to overrate the difficulty of its accomplishment, in the particular circumstances of seminaries like our own. Judging from personal experience, the author was almost induced to suppose, that, though a knowledge of the dead languages is by no means sufficient to give a right acquaintance with the vernacular grammar, the latter on the other hand was not to be acquired without the former. He was also quite aware, how little was to be expected from a child merely committing to memory the abstract rules, which he is obliged to learn from a book of syntax. He remembered too well the misery, which it had cost himself to learn the principles (or rather the *rules*, for *principles* he then never learned) of English grammar, and their utter inefficacy in so far as he was concerned. Nor could he avoid frequently calling to recollection a singular but now highly instructive incident, which

occurred in this stage of his education. In going over the grammar as usual, the boy at the head of his class was asked, "What is an article?" to which he orthodoxly replied, "An article is a particle, which " does something or other that the writer does not at this moment precisely recollect, adding, of course, in the usual manner, as a part of the definition, "as, there is *the* lady I saw at church yesterday." By some extraordinary accident, his worthy teacher, on the particular occasion of which he is now speaking, contrary to ordinary practice, asked, "What is the article in that example?" to which the boy replied, "An article is a particle, which," &c. "But what," rejoined the master, "is the particular article in that passage?" "An article is a particle," was again and again the reply. The next boy was now applied to, who insisted that the dux was quite right, and that it was in that way in his book. A similar attempt at procuring an answer was made all round the class, and with a similar want of success. The attempt was at length abandoned. The pupils were admitted ever afterwards to repeat their grammar tasks, without being any more annoyed with troublesome questions, which were not in the book. And it was not until a very long time afterwards, that the author could discover, what crotchet the good old man had taken on this singular occasion.

While, therefore, we saw the importance of introducing a knowledge of Grammar to a certain extent into our school, we perceived at the same time the necessity of securing the attention of the pupils here, as

in every other department of their education, far more to its principles, and their mode of application, than to tease them with any servile repetition of its rules. At first we conceived that it would be sufficient for our purpose, to make them acquainted merely with some of its *leading* principles, and that this might effectually be done by an inductive method, that is to say, by illustration from the passages which they happened to read. If this method should succeed, the Institution would be saved the expense of furnishing the pupils with grammars ; while they, on the other hand, would be relieved from the irksomeness of prescribed and dry tasks, and have full time left them at home for the gratification of that taste for useful reading, which had now manifested itself among them. It had the advantage also of being in accordance with all the rest of our system\*. The experiment accordingly was tried and

\* In some respects our views on the subject of the mode of teaching grammar seem to coincide with what has been called the Hamiltonian system, though the existence of such a system was quite unknown to us, for several years after the method we are describing had been in operation. We trust, however, we shall not be understood as concurring in all Mr. Hamilton's opinions, and in particular, in his extravagant anticipations of the consequences of this method of teaching. We are not sanguine enough to hope, that, either by this or by any other method of education, scholars will be formed within the short time, which he allows for that purpose. At the same time, there appears to be much in what both he, and still more his advocates, have written on the subject of education, well worthy of that attention, which we think it would have received, had his pretensions been less extravagant, and more capable of being realized.

succeeded so far beyond our expectation, that we, in a very short time, made the children in this manner acquainted not only with the fundamental principles, (which was all we originally intended), but with all the principles, and even subtleties of the grammar of their own language; so that teachers, by no means friendly to the rest of our system, have been heard most candidly to acknowledge, that in acquaintance with grammar, they have never seen our pupils surpassed by any children of their years.

As soon as we had ascertained by experience the practicability of the method, we began to put it in a more systematic form. At first the grammar, like most of our other improvements at their introduction, was confined exclusively to the highest class. Afterwards, the method was rendered more progressive, and extended by degrees so low as the eighth class. In the commencement, nothing more is done than explaining the nature of a *Noun*, and calling upon the pupil to pick out all the nouns, which occur in any passage he has been reading. He is next taught to distinguish their *genders* and *numbers*; but *cases* are reserved, till he has learnt the verb and preposition, and can thus be rendered acquainted with their object and use. If the technical names of *singular* and *plural*, &c. at first puzzle him, he is still made acquainted with the grammatical distinction, by varying the form of the question. Thus in place of asking the *number* of the word *boys*, we may ask why it is *boys* and not *boy*: and, on being

told, that it is because there are more than one, we may then, till the word becomes familiar, tell him that this is called *plural*. As soon as he can distinguish nouns tolerably well, the pupil is next instructed in the nature of *Articles*, and called upon to illustrate what he has been taught, by its application to the passage before him. He is next in a similar manner taught, by means of examining the nature of *Adjectives*, their application, and their modes of comparison. Then, in like manner *Pronouns*, and afterwards *Verbs*; leading him gradually by examples to understand their differences in point of *mood*, *time*, *number*, and *person*. Then *Prepositions*; after which the distinction of *cases* in nouns is explained. Then *Adverbs*, with the distinction betwixt them and adjectives. Then *Conjunctions*, and lastly *Interjections*.

The grammar which we teach our pupils, is (as nearly as we can venture to make it) the pure grammar of their own vernacular tongue, without reference to the peculiarities of other languages, with which our own books of grammar are for the most part unnecessarily interlarded and perplexed. "In this, I think, as on other accounts," we quote from the paper from which we have borrowed the motto of this chapter, "we show ourselves true Britons, *always overlooking our natural advantages!* Our English tongue," says a learned man, "is the most determinate in its construction, "and reducible to the fewest rules: whatever "language has less grammar in it is not intelligi-

“ble; and whatever it has more, all that it has “more is superfluous.” Why then should we puzzle our pupils with distinctions and technicalities, that our language does not recognise? We have in reality, for example, no *past perfect tense*, no *pluperfect tense*, no *potential mood*. Why then torment the children with that which does not exist? In parsing the sentences, accordingly, “I have taught,” or, “I had learned,” the words *have* and *had* are, in our school, spoken of as distinct verbs, and the *taught* and *learned* as participles. With regard also to the *potential mood*, it is very true that *may* and *can* are frequently prefixed to other verbs in the infinitive mood: but if such prefixes be sufficient to constitute a distinct mood, why should not the verbs *mus*:, *dare*, &c. have a similar effect, and constitute distinct moods of their own, under the names of *obligational* moods, *audential* moods, and we know not how many more of a similar kind. These appear to have just as much to do with our English grammar as a *potential* mood has. So impressed do our writers of grammars seem to be with the justice of this inference, that they have actually thought it necessary to *find*, or rather to *make*, a place for the word *must*, followed by an infinitive; and have, accordingly, thought proper to put it among the forms of their *potential* mood, as if the *necessity* were the same thing with “the *possibility* of doing any action.”\*

\* “In grammar, the potential is a mood denoting the possibility of doing any action.”—JOHNSON.



In a recent publication, reference has been made to a new grammatical nomenclature, which has been proposed as being easier and more intelligible to the children, than that which is in general use. In it the parts of speech are designated by the names of **POINTER, NAME, AD-NAME, FOR-NAME, THE WORD,** &c. The public have erroneously imagined, that this nomenclature emanated from our school. The truth is, however, that none of the names which it contains have ever been employed there, nor indeed had we happened to hear of them, till they appeared in that publication. And, with the greatest deference to the quarter whence it really proceeded, we cannot perceive any material benefit, that would arise from the innovation. On the contrary, we think that to substitute "the word," for example, in place of *verb*, would tend rather to create unnecessary confusion, and that the old name will be almost as easily learned as the new. We are undoubtedly inimical to all unnecessary technicality. We would speak as much as possible to children in common language, and even in using technical language, be at pains (as we have already said) to explain it till it becomes familiar. But, on the other hand, when we do use technical expressions, (and as soon as they can be made familiar, there is sometimes great convenience in their use) we consider it infinitely better to adopt old ones, which are well known, than unnecessarily to create new ones for ourselves.

In order to illustrate our method of teaching grammar, let us take the commencement of a pas-

sage in the school collection. "The grandest, the "most sublime, and extraordinary object we have "yet seen, is Fingal's Cave, in the isle of Staffa. "It is a natural grotto of stupendous size, formed "by ranges of columns," &c. If the class be only commencing this study, after telling them that all names are **NOUNS**, we desire them to pick out the nouns in the passage before them; when the first boy will give "object," the second "Fingal's," the third "cave," and so forth, till they have exhausted the remaining nouns, "isle," "Staffa," "grotto," "size," "ranges," "columns." When they are a little farther advanced, the first boy at the time of naming the noun "object," will be asked why it is "object," and not *objects*, and the distinction of *singular* and *plural* will be pointed out to him, and so on with the rest. After a little time, in place of putting the question in this form, the boy will be asked at once whether the noun is singular or plural? why? and what it would have been if it had been plural? As soon as these words *singular* and *plural* are so familiar, as not only to be easily distinguished from each other, but readily brought to recollection, the question is put in this form, Of what *number* is *object*? why? &c. A similar process is observed with regard to the *Genders*. The *Cases*, as we mentioned, are at this period omitted.

After the class have been for a sufficient time exercised exclusively on nouns, they next take the **ARTICLES** along with them. After their nature, object, and distinction have been explained, the boys are

then called upon to point out the articles contained in the particular passage. After the first boy has given "the," he is asked what every article is prefixed to? what noun "the" is prefixed to in the present instance? what would be the difference between "*the* object," and *an* object? and the distinction between the *definite* and *indefinite* article is then explained. As the children become better acquainted with this distinction, they are asked at once, Whether "the" is the *definite* or *indefinite* article? and, when these terms are sufficiently familiar to them to be brought easily to recollection, the question is put generally, What kind of article is "the?" What other kind of article is there? &c. The second boy is in like manner called upon to mention the next article in the passage, which also happens to be "the" and to be connected with the same noun "object." The third boy will in like manner mention the subsequent article "the," and its connexion with the noun "isle." And the fourth will give the article "a," and mention at the same time its connexion with the noun "grotto." In this last case, in addition to the former questions, the child will be asked why the article here is "a" and not *an*.

ADJECTIVES follow next in order. After having pointed out the difference betwixt these and substantive nouns, and the manner in which the former are employed to qualify the latter, the children are required *seriatim* to point out the different adjectives in the passage. Thus the first boy will give "grandest." He is then asked what every adjective qualifies? what noun "grandest" here

qualifies? and, when the pupil is sufficiently advanced to be able to understand the degrees of comparison, he is further asked of what degree of comparison "grandest" is? what it would have been if it had been *positive*? and what if it had been *comparative*? In like manner the other adjectives "sublime," "extraordinary," "natural," "stupendous," are successively disposed of.

PRONOUNS are next explained, and the children being called upon to mention the first one in the passage, the boy at the top answers "we." He is then asked what a pronoun is used in place of? and what "we" is put for in this passage? what kind of pronoun it is? of what *number*? why? and what it would have been if it had been *singular*? The next boy having in like manner given the pronoun "it," is asked what it is used in place of? what kind of a pronoun it is? of what *gender*? why? what it would have been if it had been *feminine*? and what if it had been *masculine*? of what *number* it is? why? and what it would have been if it had been *plural*?

The VERB and PARTICIPLE follow next. Their nature and object having been explained, the children are called upon to select the first verb in the passage, which is "have." When they are sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the verb itself, they are farther instructed with regard to its different variations. Thus in the present instance the child, who has given the word "have," is next asked of what *mood* it is? and why? of what *time*? what it would have been if it had been *past time*? of what *num-*

*ber*? why? of what *person*? and why? The second boy having in like manner given the verb "is," is asked of what *mood* it is? why? and what it would have been if it had been *subjunctive*? of what *time*? and what it would have been if it had been past instead of present? of what *number*? why? and what it would have been if it had been plural? of what *person*? why? what it would have been if it had been of the *second* person? and what if it had been of the *first*? The participles will then be selected? and the boy who mentions "seen," is asked whether it is the *present* or the *past* participle? what it would have been if it had been the other participle? and what if it had been the *past* time of the verb? The participle "formed" will then be disposed of in like manner.

PREPOSITIONS are next explained and selected. The first boy, having made mention of "in," is asked what every preposition is placed before? and before what noun "in" is here placed? The like inquiry is made with regard to the prepositions "of" and "by."

The pupils, being now made acquainted with verbs and prepositions, are at length in a condition to understand the nature and object of cases, which are therefore explained to them. In addition, accordingly, to the other questions regarding nouns and pronouns, those which relate to their cases are now asked. Thus, of what case is "object"? why? Of what case is the pronoun "we"? why? what if it had been *objective*? what if it had been *possessive*? Of what *case* is the noun "Fingal's"? Of what

*number* is it? what would have been the difference if it had been the *plural possessive*? what if it had been the *plural objective*? what if it had been the *plural nominative*? Of what case is "cave"? why?—[And here, if the child be sufficiently advanced he may be farther called upon to enumerate, in his own way, the various occasions on which a nominative case is used.] Of what case is "isle"? why? what other words besides prepositions govern an objective case? Of what case is "it"? Why? What if it had been *possessive*? what if it had been *objective*? So also with regard to the other nouns and pronouns.

The pupils are next instructed in the nature of ADVERBS, and the distinction betwixt them and adjectives. Having mentioned the word "most" as the first adverb in the passage, they are next asked what words the adverb is used to qualify? what word the adverb "most" here qualifies? \* what degree of comparison "most" is? what is the positive? what the comparative? whether "most"

\* We may here remark, that from the practice of clubbing words together, which is not uncommon in parsing the English language, we are apt to lose sight of the nature, force, and mode of operation of the individual words. Thus, for example, from the practice of joining together the adverb and the adjective in such expressions as "most sublime," in order to make out a superlative degree of the adjective, we had no little difficulty on one occasion to persuade a teacher of grammar, that the word *most* in such a case is an adverb at all. From the like cause our children have sometimes been charged by teachers with gross ignorance, for saying that the verb which follows the auxiliaries *may, can, shall, will*, and the like, is in the *infinitive* mood.

is ever any other part of speech? whether they can give any example of this? why the word is an adjective in the example so given? The children will then be required to point out the next adverb in the passage, which is "yet." With regard to this word, if they had previously been made acquainted with conjunctions, we should have asked whether it is ever any other part of speech? and when?

The next part of speech to which the pupil's attention is particularly called is the **CONJUNCTION**, of which, in the present case, they will give as an example the word "and," and be required to say what it connects.

**INTERJECTIONS** form the last subject of consideration, and as these but rarely occur in the course of ordinary reading, it becomes necessary to furnish extraneous examples.

After the children have learned all the parts of speech, or at least all the principal ones, the practice of classing the same parts of speech is entirely dropt, and each word is parsed, according to the common method, in its own order. Thus "the," the definite article prefixed to "object;" "grand-est," an adjective in the superlative degree qualifying "object;" "the," the definite article prefixed to "object;" "most," an adverb in the superlative degree qualifying "sublime;" "sublime," an adjective qualifying "object;" "and," a conjunction connecting "sublime" and "extraordinary;" "object," a noun, neuter, singular, nominative to "is;" "we," a personal pronoun, plural, nomina-

tive to "have;" "have," a verb, indicative mood, present time, plural number, and first person; "yet," an adverb qualifying "seen;" "is," a verb, indicative mood, present, singular, third person; "Fingal's," a noun, masculine, possessive, singular; "cave," a noun, neuter, nominative, because it follows the verb "is" preceded by a nominative;\* "in," a preposition governing "isle;" "the," the definite article prefixed to "isle;" "isle," a noun, neuter, singular, objective governed by the preposition "in;" "of," a preposition governing "Staffa;" "Staffa," a noun, neuter, singular, objective governed by the preposition "of." This routine, however, is very often broken in upon, (much oftener, indeed, than otherwise,) as the state of the class, the particular answer given, or any other circumstances may suggest the propriety of more particular questions.

Nothing can possibly be more satisfactory than the result of this experiment. There is, however, a very great difference betwixt teaching the grammar of one's own language, and that of a foreign tongue. In the latter case, and even in teaching the grammar of a vernacular language more complicated than our own, we should consider it absolutely necessary to put the pupil in possession of a book of grammar, from which he may learn the various inflexions and rules. Those too, who are less prac-

\* We have given this as a specimen of the manner in which our rules are repeated, or rather the principles enunciated. If the principle be expressed, the pupil may do it in any words he pleases.



tised in that method of oral instruction, which pervades our whole system, may perhaps derive greater benefit, than our school would, from the use of some judicious systematical treatise. But, even where such a book is used, whether in teaching a vernacular or a foreign tongue, it ought never to be forgotten, that grammar is not solely, nor even chiefly, to be acquired, from what a child learns at home to repeat, but from what he is practically taught by a judicious master in school ;—not from the rules contained in the systematic work, but from the application of the principles to the daily lessons. We can, accordingly, by no means approve of that method of teaching any language, which is now every day becoming more and more exploded, whereby a long and irksome preliminary process of Grammar was gone through, before a book was put into the hands of the pupil to read. Before leaving the subject of grammar, we would remark, that, in our opinion, after the pupil has been practically instructed in its leading principles, he may then with great advantage peruse some of the systematic treatises on this subject.

## CHAP. XVIII.

## ON WRITING.

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Beasts may convey, and tuneful birds may sing,  
 Their mutual feelings in the opening spring ;  
 But man alone has skill and power to send  
 The heart's warm dictates to the distant friend.

CRABBE.

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THE benefits which WRITING holds out to every class of the community, can hardly be called in question by any one, who, for a single moment, reflects upon the comfort and delight, which, especially in situations of danger and distress, a letter is calculated to afford to a distant parent, wife, or other relative or friend. Yet this blessing the opponents of education long withheld from the lower orders, on no better ground, than that, like every other blessing, it might by possibility be perverted and abused. "If you teach them to write," it was said, "they will learn to forge." And, upon the same principle, they ought, were it possible, to be

precluded from the exercise of speech, because they may lie and blaspheme, and have cause to say with Caliban—

“ You taught me language ; and my profit on't

“ Is, I know how to curse : the red plague rid you

“ For learning me your language.”

This absurd objection, though urged at no remote period, (as shall afterwards be noticed,) can no longer find any one hardy enough to be its advocate.

In the Sessional School, where, from the condition of the pupils, it is highly desirable, that every branch of education should begin at as early a period as possible, the reading and writing commence simultaneously. In order also that the pupils may have more extensive practice in this art, than the institution could afford, if they were constantly to employ pens and paper for this purpose, each of them is, (according to the practice both of the Madras and Lancasterian schools,) furnished with a pencil and slate, which last is constantly suspended round his neck, during the period of his attendance upon school. The pencils used in this school are inserted in a tin case, having the form of pens. The method, practised in some schools of Arithmetic, of using the pencil itself without a case, must necessarily be most injurious to the pupil's hand-writing. Slate-writing itself we do not recommend as equally good for the pupil with that which is taught by means of pen and ink. But it is a very fair substitute, and the pupils can thus re-

ceive much more extensive practice in writing, than they possibly could if they were confined to the less economical method of writing on paper. The more advanced pupils in the Sessional School use paper for part of their writing practice.

## CHAP. XIX.

ON ARITHMETIC.

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If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly.—SHAKESPEARE.

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IN the historical part of this work, we have already stated, that it was in ARITHMETIC we first succeeded in kindling that ardour, which has since diffused itself through every other department of the Institution. There is no department, indeed, in which either activity or indolence may be more strikingly exemplified than in this. “The whining school-boy creeping like snail unwillingly to school” is, in our opinion, but a very faint picture of sloth, when compared with the appearance, which the same boy sometimes exhibits, when nominally engaged at the desk with figures. His lounging attitude, his vacant and listless look, his eye turned ever and anon to the town clock, if such happen to be within his sight, will too surely attest the utter inertness of his mind: unless, perchance, you behold him at the happy moment, when his

brightening countenance intimates that his neighbour has invited him to a secret game at *nine O's*\* upon the slate. He thinks, perhaps, that his calculation will do as well to-morrow as to-day ; and, even if it should be called for sooner, his kind play-mate will enable him to finish it, which will quite supersede the necessity of disturbing his repose, or less pernicious amusement, by any thoughts about the principles, on which it is to be accomplished. What a contrast does such a scene exhibit to the activity, which is displayed by some other schools in the same department ! The Author had himself too often witnessed the former, and had also frequently *heard* of the latter, particularly as exhibited in his own city by Mr. Paton in his early days, and more recently by Mr. Scott. He considered the teaching of Arithmetic in classes, (a practice which existed in the Sessional School before he saw it,) as peculiarly favourable to the introduction of greater energy in this department of the seminary, than it yet possessed. The external arrangements, which had already been introduced by the Directors, were all that could be desired ; it therefore only remained for him to improve them, and to inspire that animation, which these arrangements were so well calculated to foster. For this purpose, his first object was to render excellence in this department as much a matter of emulation as in the others ; and in this he at length

\* A well known and trifling child's game at schools in Scotland for writing and arithmetic, in which there are nine figures like the letter O, connected by lines according to certain rules.

completely succeeded, partly by personal encouragement, and partly by bestowing additional prizes for combined alertness and accuracy. Arithmetic, which had hitherto been one of the duller of their occupations, now became to the scholars a source of the highest interest and amusement. At none of their sports did they ever exhibit greater zeal. They, by degrees, attained a rapidity of movement in this art, which we should have previously accounted quite incredible,\* and, along with that celerity, a proportional accuracy in calculation. But this was not all. They acquired at the same time, what, in our opinion, is infinitely more valuable

\* Some of our boys multiply the longest line of figures by another figure, (quite according to the common method,) with perfect accuracy, in less than half a second to a figure. That is to say, they will multiply such a line of figures as

7,685928,165487,938764

by 7, 8, or any other figure, in less than the sixth part of a minute. From such a line they will *subtract* another of the same length in the ordinary way, in about seven seconds; and if allowed to perform the operation from left to right, while the question is under dictation, (though it should be dictated with a rapidity which would not permit ourselves to take down merely the original figures,) they will present the whole operation, both question and answer, in scarcely one second from the time of announcing the last figure. In *addition*, they will sum up seven lines of eight figures each, in the ordinary way, in less than one-third of a minute; and, if allowed to perform the operation while the question is dictating, in about three seconds. All other calculations they perform with proportional celerity. These modes of working during dictation (*when allowed*) are suggestions of their own in their zeal to surpass each other, and not taught by the master.

than any arithmetical attainment, that general energy and activity of mind, which we found of so much service in the introduction of all our subsequent improvements, and which we doubt not has in a great measure formed the character of many of them for life.

It is sometimes observed, that accuracy in calculation is infinitely more important than rapidity. This is a proposition which no one will call in question; and therefore, if the two things were necessarily or naturally opposed to each other, there can be no doubt which should be preferred. But if, on the other hand, the two are, under proper discipline, found to go hand in hand,—if he who performs a calculation with ease and rapidity, performs it with no less accuracy than he who does so with difficulty and sluggishness,—“if,” in a word, the operation “were done when ’tis done,—then” surely, “’twere well it were done quickly.” All must undoubtedly admit, that correctness is best to be attained by practice, and who is it, that, in his early years, enjoys most the benefit of such practice? He who performs one calculation in an hour, or he who perhaps performs sixty of a similar kind in the same time. Nor need we here repeat what we have already said, of the opposite influence of these two methods in forming the permanent character of the pupils.

Much astonishment has been excited by the success of the Arithmetical department of this institution, and high approbation has been bestowed upon it. In no other way, however, can its instructors



be said to have contributed to that success, than by the zeal which they excited in the breasts of the young people themselves. Their own exertions accomplished the rest. It has been one of our leading objects to explain particularly the principles, and to point out the various processes, with which we ourselves are acquainted, for carrying these principles into practice ; but the application of the principles, and the selection of the particular operation, are, in each case, left to our pupils themselves, who frequently devise new combinations, and far shorter and easier methods, than have occurred to us. In many schools a quite opposite practice prevails. In these, upon the same principle, by which the pupil is compelled to repeat every rule in the same undeviating words, and to give every translation in precisely the master's own language, he is also required to perform every arithmetical calculation in the particular manner, which has been peremptorily enjoined by the master, or has been prescribed in some particular book. With us, on the contrary, the scholar is not only permitted, but encouraged, to take his own way ; and, accordingly, out of half a dozen of boys performing the same calculation, it not unfrequently happens, that no two of them have been following the same method.

In order also to encourage alertness in whatever is done, we have been in the practice of making the children begin with very short and easy questions at first, and, as soon as they can do these pretty briskly, to proceed to those which are longer and

more difficult. Thus, their first questions in Simple Addition never consist of more than three columns of three figures each. As soon as they can cast up these with tolerable ease, they next sum up twelve figures, than sixteen, and so forth gradually. The exercise must not be rendered fatiguing or oppressive, and must always be performed as expeditiously as possible.

The *mental arithmetic* of the Sessional School, has particularly attracted the notice of strangers, and is perhaps of more utility than many people are aware. It may be said, that this acquirement can only be of advantage when pencil and paper are not to be had, which is a situation of rare occurrence. Such situations, however, must sometimes occur, especially in the rank of life to which our children belong, where this faculty will be found of the greatest service. But it is not only in the absence of the pencil that its value is felt. The great facility which it contributes even to slate arithmetic, and the exercise which it gives the mind, are, in our opinion, none of its least recommendations. It appears, accordingly, to have been too much neglected in this country ; we had almost said totally disregarded. In the Sessional School, indeed, at the time of our first acquaintance with it, the master was in the practice of putting occasionally to his pupils, the very few and easy questions of this kind which were to be found in Davidson and Scott's work. This appeared to be far too meagre, and accomplishing comparatively little. We were convinced of the importance of the acquisition if carried sufficiently far, and

felt a strong desire to contribute to its extension : but we own we were impressed with an undue presentiment of the difficulty of such an attempt, which was increased by being informed, that peculiar mechanical contrivances had from necessity been resorted to by Pestalozzi and others for this purpose. We were resolved, however, to make the attempt, and to make it as nearly as possible upon the ordinary principles of slate-arithmetic, that the one might the more easily lend its aid to the other. The experiment was of course at first confined to the highest class, and reached no farther than the easier questions, What is the price of so many yards at so many shillings ? or at 6s. 8d., 3s. 4d., and 1s. 8d., the integral parts of a pound ? but was afterwards gradually extended to more difficult questions, such as the price of 272 yards at 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. We originally had no difficulty in making the calculations ourselves mentally along with the children, but this we were soon obliged to give up, and to resort to the slate. This too, we ere long discovered would not answer, as the children performed the calculation so much more rapidly than we, that much time was unnecessarily lost. We then, in self-defence, thought of resorting to the "Ready Reckoner," which has ever since been employed as our principal Catechism in such matters. Those, who have never had an opportunity of witnessing the performances of our children in mental arithmetic, may form some estimate of it, when they are told, that, on more than one occasion, when three or four of our best Arithmeticians were employed to answer one question in every

page of the Reckoner, and selected from every variety of column in that page, (that is to say, the first question being 13 yards at a farthing, the second 54 at a halfpenny, the third 95 at three farthings, and so on to the last, being perhaps 10,000 at 19s. 6d.) the whole questions being 147 in number, were answered *seriatim* within 20 minutes, including the time taken by ourselves in announcing the questions. Each boy was, of course, according to custom, allowed to take the method he found easiest for himself.

We afterwards put the mental arithmetic in a more systematic train, commencing it simultaneously with the slate-arithmetic, which improvement has been found of the greatest advantage, and has clearly evinced, that, though in the acquisition of this, as of every thing else, there is a variety of aptitude in children, all may arrive at it to an extent, which could not naturally be foreseen, and has been found highly beneficial. At the very commencement of Arithmetic, the child is taught to answer how many are 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 6 and 4, 10 and 5, 15 and 6, 21 and 7, &c. In preparing to enter upon subtraction, in like manner, he is asked, Take 1 from 100, how many remain? 2 from 99, 3 from 97, 4 from 94, 5 from 90, &c. So also, before entering upon multiplication he is taught to answer twice 2, three times 3, 4 times 4, &c. "What is this," we shall be asked, "but the old multiplication table?" So it undoubtedly is, and this, we beg leave to add, is the only way in which this table is now learned in our school, and it has been found a far more effectual,

as well as more pleasing mode of learning it, than when we used to enjoin it as a task. Formerly nothing about the school was more annoying or more difficult to accomplish, than learning this table : now without any such table at all, or any annoyance, (for the present practice is literally a sport,) the object is infinitely better accomplished. Our readers cannot fail to remark, how much this practice is in unison with the rest of our system in its other departments. When the children are entering upon division, they are practised in a similar manner as in multiplication, only having the questions inverted ; for example, how many eights are in 100 ? In the same manner, in entering upon the compound rules, they are made acquainted with the money tables, &c. and practised upon them mentally.

Places are regularly taken in arithmetic as in the other departments of education in the School. Whenever a pupil has finished his calculation on the slate, he steps forward to an inner circle, and presents it to the monitor. If it be accurate, he becomes dux, and so on *seriatim*. If the calculation be inaccurate, the pupil returns to the outer circle to complete it. In mental arithmetic, in like manner, the first boy who returns a correct answer is put up to the top. In this department each pupil, (whatever may be his present place in the class,) is, for an obvious reason, allowed to speak out as soon as he has performed his calculation, without waiting to be pointed to ; which, we have already mentioned, is not the case in the other departments.

The children in the Sessional School generally

enter upon arithmetic about the same time that they commence their Second Book in reading. Though we are most friendly to a much earlier commencement of arithmetic than has been commonly practised, still we think it quite possible to fall into the opposite extreme, and are disposed to guard against the error of commencing this study before its principles can be made plain to a child, or at least without much sacrifice of his comfort. From the time the pupils enter upon this study, they are engaged in it for an hour every day. This hour is now divided into three parts. The first twenty minutes are exclusively devoted to mental arithmetic; the next twenty minutes are employed in performing calculations under rules which had formerly been taught; and the last portion is allotted to the new rule with which they are not yet thoroughly acquainted.

## CHAP. XX.

## ON GEOGRAPHY.

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From sea to sea, from realm to realm I rove.

TICKELL.

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THOSE who, though they have no great knowledge of GEOGRAPHY, have all their lives had some acquaintance with it, can hardly form a correct estimate of the inconvenience and mortification, to which *they* are exposed, who are quite ignorant of any place beyond their own town or hamlet. From the time that the children in the Sessional School began to consider reading, whether in school or at home, no longer as a task, but as a source of interest and information, the inconvenience of course was more apparent, and the Author naturally became desirous in some degree to alleviate it. He resolved, therefore, if the proposal should meet with the approbation of the managers of the institution, to endeavour to communicate to the pupils some informa-

tion in this department of knowledge. This branch of study, if introduced at all, was not intended in the slightest degree to interfere with the previous employments of the pupils, nor to be obligatory upon any of them, nor even to be regarded as such an inherent branch of education in the establishment, that every or any pupil or his parent might demand it as a matter of right. It was to be considered in the light of a boon, bestowed at extra hours, when the writer should find it convenient to attend, upon such pupils as should volunteer their exertions for this purpose, and, at the same time, show themselves worthy of this additional indulgence, by the propriety of their general conduct, and their attention to their other studies. The proposal was no sooner mentioned, than it was warmly seconded by the Secretary, and received the cordial concurrence of the Directors. As soon as it was communicated to the scholars, a considerable number of volunteers immediately came forward, which has more and more increased, as the advantages of the study began to be known and appreciated.

In carrying this plan into execution, we put no books into the hands of the children, nor prescribed to them any tasks to be learned at home. We set maps\* before them, and pointed out to them, and afterwards required them to point out to us, the

\* At first we used nothing better than the maps contained in an ordinary school atlas, until we were presented by Lady Ruthven, with the very handsome donation of Arrowsmith's Large Maps of the Four Quarters.



various places on these maps, describing at the same time any thing remarkable connected with these places. As soon as they were able to do this sufficiently well upon the map, they were next transferred to a mere blank board, and required in the same manner to point out upon it the position of the same places, with the relative situations to each other. We have found this method remarkably successful in imprinting the map on the memories of the scholars. We by no means say, that the use of books ought to be proscribed in the study of geography, but much more use ought undoubtedly to be made of maps. With regard to himself, at the time of entering upon the study of geography, the Writer may mention what he presumes must also have occurred to many others, that he learned the names almost entirely from the book, as if they had been a mere vocabulary, and could much more easily have pointed out the word in the book than the place in the map. The use of the blank board too, has, in our opinion, considerable advantages, which do not belong to the employment even of outline maps, though without names. The outline too often directly suggests at once both the existence and position of a country, which, where the board is used, are brought to recollection merely by the map engraved on the memory. Thus, for example, the *boot* in the skeleton map of Europe reminds the pupil at once of *Italy*, and of its position; whereas, in employing the board, he must recollect, first, that there is a boot, and, secondly, where it is.

So high an opinion have the public entertained

of the extensive and minute knowledge of geography displayed by our pupils, that several of them are at this moment employed in the most respectable private families, in teaching this department of knowledge. On this subject it only remains for us to notice the debt of gratitude which the institution owes to the Rev. THOMAS SMITH GOLDIE, who, for several years, relieved the Author of the active superintendence of its geographical department, as well as in other respects made the most zealous exertions for its general welfare. Of this gentleman's highly useful services, the establishment has been deprived, by his advancement to the pastoral charge of the parish of Coldstream.

## CHAP. XXI.

## ON ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS.

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Patrons and Judges much rever'd,  
 This is the day we wish'd and fear'd  
 Our labours to repay.

ANONYMOUS.

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IN almost every public School in Scotland, there is a great annual EXAMINATION, as it is called, at which the pupils, arrayed in their best attire, in presence of the Clergy, and sometimes also of the Magistracy of the district, their own friends and guardians, and all others who may please to give attendance, make a display of the proficiency, which they have attained in the course of the preceding year. The universality of this practice is, we conceive, in a great measure to be ascribed to the state of the law in that country, by which the superintendence of education is there specially vested in the Clergy of the established Church. In consequence of this enactment, the General Assembly exact from

each Presbytery an annual report of the condition of the schools within their respective bounds; in fulfilment of which requisition, the Presbytery appoint a Committee of their number once a-year to examine each seminary, and enable them to make their report. Such exhibitions undoubtedly have their advantages. The zealous teacher, on whose meritorious exertions no human eye, save those of his own juvenile charge, has rested since the last return of a similar occasion, nor in all probability would otherwise ever have rested, has thus one day in the year provided for him, to which he may look forward, as affording an opportunity of showing how he has in the interval been discharging his sacred trust. The indolent master, on the other hand, knowing that such a day also awaits *him*, is compelled to make some provision for its approach, and for this purpose to rouse himself somewhat for a season from his wonted lethargy. Their pupils also, imbued with kindred feelings, and actuated by kindred motives, always exhibit, as this day advances, more than ordinary activity.

But if these exhibitions undoubtedly have their benefits, they, on the other hand, from the manner in which they are generally conducted, are by no means unaccompanied with serious evils. They are always in each school about the same period of the year, and are in general exclusively conducted by the Master, without the intervention of those who are the nominal Examiners. In other words, they are literally exhibitions, not examinations. The teachers, knowing all this, not unnaturally make

their arrangements accordingly. For a considerable period preceding "the day,—the great, th' important day," all is preparation. The ordinary business in some schools is at a stand, and it is no longer a matter of consideration, what method of training will best conduce to the permanent benefit of the pupils, but what will enable them to manœuvre most adroitly upon the Review day. These are two things which ought not to be confounded. It is one thing to make a pupil acquainted with a language; it is another to enable him to repeat, with undeviating accuracy, the particular lessons which he has been taught, or rather which have been hammered into him by his master. The one is education, the other is mere *cramming*. The one is rational, the other mechanical. The one calls various powers of the pupil into action, the other is an effort of mere memory alone. Where the practice in question prevails, every child in a class, let his own acquirements be what they may, is detained until all his companions are able to read with precisely the same tone and inflection, or to translate in precisely the same words, as have been previously dictated to them by their master. Hence the appearance of the children at the public exhibition, for which all this is a preparation, besides being monotonous and unpleasing, affords no test of their real attainments. Young people have been known at an examination to translate, with the most remarkable fluency, the passages which had thus been wrought into them, who, upon subsequent trial, were found utterly incapable of making out for themselves, with the aid

of their dictionary, any other sentence of the same book ; and who, even with regard to the former passages, when the translation put into their mouths was at all free, were equally unable to give a literal translation, or in any way to show how the words came to convey the meaning, which they had been required to assign to them. In like manner, some have astonished the spectators by turning with perfect accuracy, and reading in the Latin order with wondrous volubility, such parts of the "Grammatical Exercises," or of "Mair's Introduction," as had been previously gotten up ; who all the while were so completely ignorant of the principles of their construction, as to be quite unable to turn any other sentence of equal, or even greater simplicity ; nay, in every respect similar to those, with which they apparently exhibited so intimate an acquaintance. A whole class has even sometimes been thrown into confusion by being called upon to decline *musa* instead of *penna*.

In some schools the skill of the master is evinced by the *extent*, to which he can carry this system of cramming, and his success, we are sure, would in many instances be quite incredible to those, who have not had an opportunity of witnessing feats of this description. But some masters, we know, make no such pretensions, and content themselves with prescribing to each class, however advanced, a single passage to be read, (which is even sometimes marked in all their books, with signs directing the particular inflexions of the voice to be employed at each individual clause),—a single sentence to be

parsed,—a few set questions to be answered,—or a few particular words to be spelt, upon the great occasion ! Nay, special care, we have been informed by the pupils themselves, is sometimes taken, that each individual may be prepared with the particular question in the Catechism, which it is to be his province to answer, and the particular word, which he is to be employed to spell : though occasionally, in consequence of the unexpected absence of a companion, this beautifully preconcerted order is deranged, and the smooth tranquillity of the scene disturbed, by the voice of some ill-fated elf exclaiming, “that’s no my ane.” Such a practice assuredly cannot be too loudly condemned, not only as an unprofitable waste of time, but as highly prejudicial to the pupils, on account of the odious lesson of deception, which is thus early instilled into their tender minds. And what, after all, is the object of all this ? Merely to exhibit the unnatural spectacle of a school without blunders, or even slips, where the lowest child in a class reads for a day, in precisely the same manner with the highest ; nay, where the junior classes read with no less facility and correctness than the senior.

At the examinations in some of our classical seminaries, verses and other writings, purporting to be the productions of the pupils, are exhibited as specimens of their skill in composition. There is no department of the exhibition, which, unless it be very strictly guarded, is more liable than this to gross abuse, or fraught with consequences of a more lamentably demoralizing nature. It is impossible to

disguise, that strong apprehensions have been entertained (and the very existence of such apprehensions, even if groundless, is of itself obviously most prejudicial to the moral feelings of the young,) that these writings are by no means always the authentic and genuine productions of those, whose names they bear ; and that, even where honours and prizes are at stake, the real competition is sometimes not among the pupils themselves, but their private teachers : while at other times a boy of high and honourable feelings is doomed to enter the lists in a most unequal contest with the tutor of a companion, who is himself in every respect his inferior, but quite unembarrassed with his own better principles. Some highly respectable domestic teachers have, we well know, been exposed to a severe trial, by their virtuous and meritorious resistance to all importunities to become participators in so infamous a scheme of duplicity. Happy would it be for the morals of the rising generation, were this spirited conduct to become an object of universal imitation, and were no tutor to be found to lend himself to so base a purpose ! Happy still more, if no parent could be found so utterly regardless of the real welfare of his child, as to make, to hint, or even for a single moment to harbour within his own bosom, so flagitious a proposal ! Let him only be induced to reflect, how little the highest reputation for verse-making, or even any more profitable attainment, can compensate to the child, of whose morals he is the natural guardian, for the base principle, which he himself is thus instrumental in implanting in his



youthful bosom; and how effectually, by his own conduct, or even connivance upon one occasion of this description, he may counteract all those better lessons, which his lips have taught. Could we flatter ourselves, that these remarks would have any influence in inducing parents, tutors, and pupils, to make such an open and determined stand upon this point, as would either effectually banish the detestable practice if it exists, or wipe out the foul calumny if it be no more than a calumny, we should consider ourselves as having achieved a far more important benefit by these few lines, than by all those details, to which the partial admirers of our own institution are disposed to attach so much importance.

To the alleged frauds, of which we have now been speaking, the master of the public school, it is proper to mention, is not himself a party, and from the manner, in which the task is generally executed, is himself little less liable to deception than strangers. In some instances, however, the master, we believe, before venturing to expose the productions of his pupils to the public eye, is at pains to touch them up to a very considerable extent, and strip them of their deformities. We are aware that this practice has been vindicated, on the ground that no deception in such a case is either effected or intended, it being understood that such liberties are generally taken with juvenile productions; in the same manner, we suppose, as where *rouge* is prevalently called in to the aid of female beauty, it is not to be expected in every case at least to pass for native complexion.

The validity of such an answer we can by no means bring ourselves to admit. But leaving the infinitely important question of morality, we may be permitted to inquire, for what purpose such compositions, if not the genuine and unassisted productions of their avowed authors, are exhibited at all? What else have they to recommend them? If they possess any value whatever, must it not consist in their being tests of the talents and acquirements, not of the master, but of his pupils? If they be exhibitions of skill, should we not be permitted to behold the deformities as well as the beauties? What interest can the general observer of human nature take in such essays, except in so far as they afford him real indications of the capacity of the youthful mind? What commendable interest can parents or guardians take in them, except in so far as they afford a fair opportunity of displaying the personal attainments and comparative merits of those, whom they have under their charge? If the master, for the sake of his own reputation, naturally wish to show that the errors in the original have not escaped his own observation, let him by all means amend them, but in such a manner as to make it appear what these amendments have been.

In some elementary schools, much time previous to the Examination is spent in drilling the children to the pompous recitation of dramatic speeches, the nature and connexion of which they do not in the slightest degree understand. Well does the Author remember the pains that were employed, (and he now thinks very uselessly employ-

ed) in preparing him, when a child of six or seven years of age, to deliver with *eclat* the speech, which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Brutus on the death of Cesar. At that time he knew nothing at all about Brutus, or Cesar, or his crimes, or the Capitol where the question of his death was said to be enrolled ; and, though this speech is much more simple and intelligible, than many others employed on similar occasions, he remembers well being in particular danger of choking upon the passage wherein he was made to say, that Cesar's "glory was not *extenuated* wherein he was worthy, nor his offences *enforced* for which he suffered death !" On the same occasion another little urchin loudly and vehemently exclaimed, that his "voice was still for war," swearing lustily by the "gods" with wide distended cheek, that there was no room for any debate upon the subject. A third, armed with a book in one hand and in the other a wooden sword or a ruler, (the author cannot say which, for either was occasionally in use,) surveyed alternately what he was directed to call, he knew not why, his "bane and antidote," concluding with a magnanimous determination to resolve all his doubts and difficulties by an instantaneous act of suicide. Surely the time of children of this age, and of their master, might be far more profitably employed, than in preparation for such exhibitions as these.

While we assure our readers, that they are no imaginary pictures, nor representations of individual and solitary instances, that we have now been attempting to draw, very far indeed is it from our wish to pre-

sent them in their worst aspects as of universal application. At the same time we are well aware, that even good teachers, who disapprove, as much as we do, of the practices, which we have now been describing, and have indeed every reason to do so, from the unequal competition which their own superior merits have thus to sustain, are *to a certain extent* compelled to go along with the current. They allege, and not without reason, that were they, under present circumstances, to adopt a course in this respect very different from that of their neighbours, a contrast might be drawn of a nature most injurious to real merit. The fault is to be sought for in the method of examination, rather than in the teachers. It is quite natural to expect, that the latter should conform themselves to the former. In the Sessional School, at the period of the Author's first acquaintance with it, the masters, actuated by the feelings which we have described, naturally conducted their examinations in the manner to which they had previously been accustomed, and he had thus an opportunity afforded him of witnessing the evil tendency and pernicious effects of such exhibitions. When, at a subsequent period, he attempted to counteract these effects, by making the procedure on the day of the annual examination as similar as possible to that on other days, he still found the monitors so imbued with their former notions on this subject, that, for some time previous to the usual period of this exhibition, they were obviously consulting rather the appearance, which they wished their pupils to make upon that occasion, than their general and permanent advantage.

In order therefore to break through such practices, it has been deemed expedient, for several years past, to drop entirely even the name of an examination, and to distribute the prizes on one of the ordinary public days, without previous notice or invitation to any individual. This the present circumstances of our school, which is regularly visited and thoroughly examined by strangers twice every week, permit us to accomplish, without sacrificing any of those real benefits, which, in the opening of the Chapter, we have attached to annual public examinations. And if, at a future period, under other circumstances, (as is highly probable,) it shall be found expedient to resume the yearly public inspection, we trust that the interruption of the former practice will be found of service, in enabling the Directors to put it under a more rational and less exceptionable arrangement.

In the generality of Schools, we are well aware that these examinations could not without disadvantage be abolished, at least unless some substitute were found, by which the Public might be made acquainted with their progress, and induced to take an interest in their success. The great question on this subject therefore is, In what manner may these visitations be rendered most effectual for the attainment of their legitimate objects, and stript of those disadvantages, with which they are at present attended? This is a question, which it of course remains principally for the Presbyteries to solve. At the same time, perhaps, we may be pardoned for offering a few suggestions on a subject, which

we have so deeply at heart. And here the first and most obvious improvement which suggests itself is, that the Examinations should be made of a substantial kind, and not mere exhibitions, as at present they too generally are. For this purpose they should not be left solely in the hands of the master. The passages, on the contrary, ought in every case to be selected by the examiners themselves, and, in advanced classes at least, it should be no objection, that these passages (if sufficiently simple) are new to the pupils. Even in the youngest classes, it would be of great advantage to ascertain, whether the little ones can read the words, which they have already seen, in any other part of the book, than that in which they have formerly been exhibited to them. In the more advanced classes, after the master has exhausted his own examinations upon the passage selected, the examiners should themselves put such pertinent questions as occur to them, for the purpose of eliciting from the pupils not merely their acquaintance with the individual passage, but their general information, and their knowledge of the principles and structure of the language,—such an examination, in short, as is at present so beneficially practised by strangers in the Sessional School on every public day. Under such a method of examination, indeed, as we have now suggested, it would be unreasonable to expect such splendid exhibitions as at present, such faultless accuracy, such apparent uniformity of attainment in all the pupils. In the less advanced classes in particular, great allowance in such a case must be made, and, were the practice

which we are now recommending, to become general, would be made, for a want of readiness and fluency, and for natural mistakes. Nay, the pronunciation or the spelling, according to regular analogy, of a word at once anomalous and uncommon, would, in the case of a young pupil, come to be regarded, as it ought to be, in the light of a triumph to his master, no less justly earned, than the most faultless pronunciation or spelling of those words with which he is more familiar. From the learner we are not to look for the acquirements of the learned, else why is he still learning, and to continue to learn perhaps for years to come? Were the examinations conducted in the manner we now propose, there cannot be a doubt, that they would prove far more interesting to every discerning spectator, and infinitely more beneficial to the pupils and to the community. But none assuredly would profit more from this improvement than deserving teachers, whose real merits would no longer be obscured or eclipsed. We have indeed long been convinced, that, even as things are, good masters often do themselves very great injustice, by their groundless timidity to quit the beaten tract, and incur the risk of invidious comparisons. Their pupils, subjected to no public extemporary trial, are naturally regarded as being no more capable of any such effort than others, who, though in reality much their inferiors, read prepared passages with the like fluency and accuracy with themselves. It was indeed the Author's own good fortune, on one occasion, to render to the Teacher of an elementary school an act of justice, which he

had unwisely shrunk from performing for himself. The whole pupils in one of his classes had read an English passage selected by himself, without a single error or even momentary hesitation, and with a tone and inflexion obviously quite artificial and industriously studied. Such an exhibition naturally made a most unfavourable impression upon the minds of the examiners ; who, if the examination had been here permitted to close, would undoubtedly have departed with other feelings than those of satisfaction. Observing this tendency, the Writer took the liberty of suggesting to them the propriety of selecting a passage for themselves, which the same pupils might be desired to read. His suggestion, fortunately for the master, was adopted. There were now indeed more slips, and the difference between the children in the various parts of the class was more apparent : but the general appearance of the class was very highly creditable both to themselves and to their master, their reading was far more natural, and consequently far more pleasing than before, and strong wonder was expressed that a teacher, whose pupils were capable of presenting such an appearance, should ever have been made to exhibit themselves in a manner calculated to do both them and him so much less credit.—We cannot quit this part of our subject without remarking, that though a real examination conducted to a certain extent by the examiners themselves, has in this country been less practised than we could wish, we would by no means have it to be supposed that it is nowhere practised at all. Not farther



back than last autumn, the Author had himself an opportunity of seeing an examination admirably conducted in the manner which he is now recommending.

We would, in the next place, strongly recommend, that the report of each committee of Presbytery, relative to the schools which have fallen within the sphere of their visitation, should be made not only in every respect perfectly fair and candid, but full, minute, and discriminating. It should specify the number of scholars in attendance on each school,—the branches which are there taught, and the number of pupils taking advantage of each branch respectively,—the books there employed,—the nature of the examinations to which the pupils had been subjected,—their state of proficiency at the period of the present report contrasted, (if circumstances shall point out the expediency of such a contrast) with what it had been in the same school in former years, or with the progress of pupils in corresponding stages in other schools,—any peculiar excellency or defect in the method of teaching pursued in each school, and in particular whether the children displayed general intelligence and acuteness, or merely an acquaintance with particular tasks. Were such a report as this regularly and faithfully made up and published, it would obviously be attended with the most important advantages. The examination would no longer, on the part either of the examiners or the examined, be a mere matter of routine, but an object of earnest anxiety. An animating emulation would be excited among the teachers,

of which their pupils and the community could not fail to reap the benefits. In place of granting, as at present, to a particular master a special certificate for the purpose of being employed as an advertisement for his own seminary, the Presbytery would refer him and the public to the more unbiassed account, which they had given of his school along with the others of the district, in their general and comparative report. And how infinitely more valuable to a meritorious teacher, desirous of promotion, would be the favourable mention of his name in a series of such reports, than the most flaming testimonial got up for the particular occasion. Were these reports attended with no other advantage, they would form a valuable addition to our statistics, exhibiting an interesting view of the progress of education in our parish schools.

We would, in the last place, take the liberty of strongly urging upon the parochial clergy the infinite importance of visiting from time to time their own parish schools, and making themselves well acquainted with their actual and ordinary condition. This might be accomplished without any of that officious interference, which, for reasons explained in a former chapter, we should certainly condemn. Such visits would, in our opinion, be attended with incalculable benefits, by infusing new life and energy into the seminary, and rendering both the teacher and the scholar perpetually alert. They would prove a most acceptable reward to the zealous, a terror to the indolent. They would enable the parish clergyman to point out to his brethren, at their

public examination, any thing in his school, which he should deem particularly worthy of their attention, or standing in need of their animadversion. In the introduction especially of any improvement into a seminary, the minister's countenance would be highly desirable, and might have a tendency in a great measure to remove the groundless prejudices of his people. What, on the other hand, can be more disheartening to a zealous teacher than to learn,—and this we have occasion to know, he is sometimes doomed to learn,—that his minister, when consulted by his parishioners, with regard to improvements introduced into his own parish school, without taking the least trouble to investigate those changes to which their prejudices are opposed, contents himself with returning the worse than chilling answer, that he knows as little as themselves about these new fashions. Shall we be reminded, that the clergy have other things to do, than to trouble themselves much about their parish schools! We apprehend no such objection from the great body of the Clergy of Scotland. They know and feel that the superintendence of these schools is a most important branch of their duty; that it is one intimately connected with their pastoral office; and one which a Presbyterian of the Church of Scotland ought to have a particular pride in discharging. If some of them at present take less interest in this department of their duty than we could desire, it is, we are persuaded, to be in a great measure ascribed to an undue diffidence of the value of their own exertions. Let them only be

persuaded to make the experiment, and we will venture to assure them, that they will find no part of their duties more pleasing, nor any by which they can more effectually promote the best interests, or secure the gratitude, of their flocks.

## CHAP. XXII.

## ON HOLIDAYS.

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If all the year were playing holidays,  
 To sport would be as tedious as to work ;  
 But, when they seldom come, they wished-for come.

SHAKESPEARE.

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THERE is in most schools an annual season, still more important in the eyes of the pupils, than even the day of examination, by which it is not unfrequently preceded,—we mean that of the VACATION. To this auspicious season many a longing thought is turned. For weeks, or even months before its arrival, “O FOR AUGUST” appears (or at least in the Author’s school-boy days appeared) inscribed in large characters on the external walls of the school-house, while the sentiment itself is internally engraved on the bosoms of the youthful inmates during the whole period of their long preceding year. Woe be to the luckless wight who would dare to innovate upon so sacred an institution ! The murmurs more deep than loud which are at this mo-

ment\* heard in the author's own profession, in consequence of the proposed curtailment of the lawyer's *saturnalia*, are but a faint emblem of what might be expected in the event to which he is now alluding. The abolition of the Spring Vacation in the High School of Edinburgh in former times, history informs us, cost a worthy magistrate his life; and, if a milder fate should await the man, who could venture to propose the abolition of that interval of relaxation, which is still permitted to remain, he might at all events lay his account with no less vehement indignation. Happily for ourselves, we have no such rash intentions. The recollections of our boyish days are yet too strong to permit us to harbour any so sinister design, were we even less satisfied than we are of the beneficial effects of such breathing times, especially to those, whose minds have been previously much exhausted by intense study and application. The only question, therefore, which remains on this subject, regards the frequency and duration of such respites. When these occasions recur too frequently, they in a great measure lose their zest, whereas, according to the language of the poet in the motto of this chapter, "When they seldom come, they wished-for come." When they are only of moderate duration, they, without depriving the student of any of his former acquirements, give new vigour to his mind, as well as to his body, and send him back to his mental toils like "a giant refreshed." When they are spun

out too long, much time must be afterwards lost in enabling him even to regain his former ground ; while, from the natural relaxation in his former habits of diligence and application, he is much less able than before to make the necessary exertion.

In the Sessional School the annual vacation, which takes place in Autumn, seldom exceeds fourteen days. The other holidays are the two ordinary periods from Thursday to Monday inclusive at the time of the celebration of the Lord's supper, Christmas day, New Year's day, and his Majesty's Birthday. Saturday is a regular half-holiday. In other schools the annual vacation generally extends to a much longer period than in this, sometimes to six and even eight weeks. In this respect we by no means hold out our own school as a model for others, which are placed in a different situation. The vacation there also originally extended to a longer period : but the great danger from evil contagion, to which youth of the lower ranks of society are exposed in a great city like our own, soon forced itself on the notice of the Directors, and compelled them to render the period of vacation shorter, than they could have wished for the sake of the master, or even of the pupils themselves in other circumstances. We are however inclined to think that the general tendency at present is rather to run into the opposite extreme. In the course of two months of idleness there cannot be a doubt that a child must unlearn in a great measure what he has already learned, and lose in a considerable degree his former habits of exertion. It may be said that he is not pre-

cluded from prosecuting his studies during the period of recess, and that he may carry his Horace or his Virgil with him to the river's side. This is all very true; but, judging from our own past recollections, we suspect that it is a course which he will not always be much inclined to pursue; nor should we by any means form a less favourable presentiment of a boy, because, during the time avowedly set apart for relaxation, he makes his angle-rod, rather than his book, his companion. Two vacations in the year of one month each, one in spring and the other in autumn, would we think be preferable to one vacation of two months. Such an arrangement, we conceive, would be attended with more of that seasonable and beneficial relaxation, which it is the object of such intervals of leisure to afford, while it would at the same time be less liable to the objections arising from their protracted duration. This proposal, however, might possibly interfere with family arrangements in those seminaries, where the vacations are at present of longest duration, and might deprive the children of the important benefit of rural air.

In some schools there are a few single holidays, thrown in at regular intervals in the course of the Session. Thus, in the High School of Edinburgh, every quarter-day is a stated holiday, and some similar practice, we believe, prevails in the Edinburgh New Academy. This appears to be an extremely beneficial arrangement. We can by no means equally approve of the practice which prevails in some other seminaries, of granting the pupils a



holiday, whenever it is asked for them by a magistrate or any visitor of the school. This we consider to be an extremely dangerous precedent. Saturday, which in many schools is a half holiday, has now in some been converted into an entire holiday, leaving only five teaching days in their weeks. This does not seem to be an improvement. On the other hand, we consider that very great benefit may be reaped from an occasional quarter of an hour, or half hour, taken from the usual hours of business, and granted to the different classes by rotation for play at the school door. By adopting this arrangement in the Sessional School, we are by experience convinced, that we have been consulting not only the health of the pupils, but even their advantage, with a view to education alone. After such intervals, we find them enter upon their studies with redoubled energy and spirit. In those schools, where no monitors are employed, and a large proportion of the pupils are consequently at every moment unemployed, how much better would it be to allow them the benefit of air and active exercise out of doors, than to inure them to lounging habits within ! But even where there are monitors, as we can well attest, much benefit will be found to result from such an arrangement. For this purpose, it would be highly desirable that every school should either be furnished with play ground, or placed in the neighbourhood of a common.

## CHAP. XXIII.

## DAILY EVENING SCHOOL.

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My Son, gather instruction from thy youth up ; so shalt thou find wisdom till thine old age.—SON OF SIRACH.

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IN a previous portion of this work some account was given of that most interesting department of our institutions, THE DAILY EVENING SCHOOL. As, however, upon reconsideration it appears to the author, that this is a subject which he ought to bring more under the notice of the public than he has hitherto done, he shall dedicate to it the present chapter.

Various are the benefits which such an establishment as this holds out to a large city or populous district. How many children of the lower ranks are compelled to quit the ordinary schools at a period of life, when they have as yet been able to reap no advantage from the education, which they have hitherto received, or at best an advantage which is immediately lost from the want of opportunity to improve it ! How

much highly profitable instruction, too, may be infused into the mind in youth of which in early childhood it is quite unsusceptible! The great object accordingly of the establishment, which we are now advocating, is to give permanence and usefulness to previous instruction, which in a thousand instances would be otherwise almost entirely thrown away. Even, however, if an evening school had nothing else to recommend it than the innocent occupation which it affords for leisure hours, its benefits would still be incalculable. During the long winter evenings, especially, how many lads in every city are thrown idle without any profitable resource! The Mechanics' Institutes, indeed, it may be said, are open to them. But how small a proportion of those of whom we are now speaking are there, who are capable of deriving either pleasure or profit from such institutions. Many accordingly who had previously entered the School of Arts and had afterwards become pupils of our Evening School, have acknowledged how grievously they were now conscious that they had begun at the wrong end. Perhaps it may be said that they might employ themselves in reading at home. Even, however, if they had access to books, much are those mistaken, who imagine that the ordinary education given before apprenticeship is always sufficient to confer either the taste or the capacity for useful reading. Hence accordingly it is that so many, as a resource, are driven to the streets and exposed to all the dangers of evil company. Against these dangers a well superintended Evening School in a great measure affords an antidote. The qualifi-

cation, however, which we have annexed of *well superintended* merits particular attention; for unless this be the case the institution itself is fraught with the very dangers which we are now so anxiously deprecating. If those, who have the charge of the seminary, be regardless of the attendance of the pupils, it may become a nuisance in place of a blessing. A parent or guardian perhaps sends to an establishment of this kind a lad, whom under other circumstances he would have retained under his own eye at home. The youth, in place of attending school, walks the streets, associates with profligate companions, and is ruined. To obviate this peril, a roll is daily called in our evening as well as in our morning school. Even the eldest absentee is next day called upon to explain the cause of his absence. With regard to the younger, if the circumstances seem to demand it, notice of the default is given to his parent, master, or guardian. And, with respect to all, those who take an interest in them may satisfy themselves by reference to the roll itself. This arrangement has been found to be attended with the most beneficial consequences; so much so indeed, that we are induced to regard it as almost essential.

Before quitting these general observations, there is another question connected with the subject, which has lately been much agitated in this city, and well merits attention. The question to which the author here refers, and on which his opinion has often been asked, is this, whether, in order to facilitate the attendance upon such seminaries, shopkeepers ought not to be called upon to close their shops at an ear-

lier hour than has hitherto been their custom. And here it may be presumed that in whatever way the question itself may be solved, it is impossible either to approve or justify the tone, which too many of the young men and their abettors have adopted upon the subject; and still less the insolent measures to which they have of late (April 1833) resorted to make good their demand.\* These have unhappily been but too much in unison with the character and temper of the times. A right has been demanded rather than a boon solicited. The convenience of the public and the interest of the master must alike, it has been taken for granted, yield to the accommodation of the apprentice. Such a spirit, all who wish well to the cause of order, and particularly to the welfare of the lower classes of society themselves, should most anxiously endeavour to curb. Leaving, however, the manner in which the thing has been asked, let us next turn our attention to the thing itself. To the author it seems to be a matter of very little consequence, what response he or any one else may give upon the subject, or what resolution even the masters themselves may form. It is a matter which, whether they will or not, must be regulated by circumstances. There can be little doubt that, unless their interest pointed in another direction, masters would in general, with a view to their own ease and comfort, be no less inclined than their servants to shut their

\* The youths have actually hired a porter to stand with a torch, displaying the agreement to shut at a particular hour, at the shop doors of such of their masters as had found it necessary to recede from the conditional agreement.

shops at an early hour. But their actually doing this or not, will ultimately depend not upon their own inclination, but upon the demand of the public. So long as any considerable proportion of purchasers find it any convenience to make their dealings at a later hour than that which may have been resolved upon, they will ever find sellers ready to accommodate them ; and this, on the other hand, cannot fail ultimately to regulate the conduct of those, who, whether for their own ease or the accommodation of their shopmen, would otherwise be disposed to close business at an earlier hour. This, which might have been foreseen, has already been experienced in our own city. A few months have scarcely elapsed since the experiment of early shutting began to be tried, and its failure is already apparent. Some shopkeepers refused to become parties to the agreement. Others, while they put the shutters on their windows at the stipulated hour, still lingered in their shops with their shopmen, admitting purchasers. Hence each has become jealous of another, and things are fast returning into their former course. Nor is the author prepared to say that this ought to be a subject of regret, whether viewed in reference to the great body of the youths themselves, or to the public. Nothing is more certain than that Idleness is the prolific parent of vice and mischief, and to many has proved more ruinous than even comparative ignorance. Leisure hours, precious as they may be to a few, are to the great body of youth a grievous snare, and to the community the most fertile source of all its disorders. Those very disorders, which led to the original establishment of the parochial in-

stitutions, were distinctly traced to the misemployment of the vacant *Sunday* evenings ; for which evil a remedy was sought, and to a certain degree found in these institutions. Though all the petitioners for an early release from business asked this indulgence for the avowed purpose of giving attendance upon places of education, it was by no means when granted so applied by all. Of our own establishment, very few of this class availed themselves, and those few more through the influence of their masters, than their own inclinations. It may be said that the School of Arts had stronger attractions, and so possibly it had in prospect even for those who were ill enough prepared to take advantage of it, and who in consequence proved irregular in their attendance. Still for a few who did enroll their names in the books of any seminary, there were multitudes who found no such employment for their vacant hours. To what conclusion, then, it may naturally be asked of us, are we prepared to come upon this subject. To this we would answer, as to the time of shutting shops, leave matters (as indeed ultimately they must be left) to their natural course. Let there be no forced attempts to alter this by conventions between masters and servants, or among masters themselves, and still less by any interference, even in the way of recommendation on the part of magistrates or town-councils, though applied to (as they have lately been) for this purpose. But let each master, so far as his own interests and the convenience of his customers will permit, be at pains to make arrangements for the accommodation of such of his lads as are desirous to attend evening schools : and let it

be distinctly understood, that this is given as an indulgence, and one which will be withdrawn whenever it is found to be abused. If more than can with convenience be spared at one time from any shop solicit this indulgence, let it be granted in turns. This is precisely what was done by many kind masters before their shopmen joined in the more clamorous solicitations which have been lately made; and it is in accordance with what happens every day in writers' offices and surgeons' shops.

In any opinion which the author has now felt himself called upon to give, he trusts that no one will accuse him of being desirous to discourage evening schools; for there is, in truth, no branch of the establishment of the parochial institutions, which has afforded him greater delight than this. The spectacle which Market Street every evening exhibits, cannot but give the highest satisfaction to every benevolent mind, especially when contrasted with those scenes in which the imagination cannot fail to picture so many others of the like rank in society at the same moment engaged. Here, between the hours of eight and ten, are to be seen upwards of a hundred young men eager in the pursuit of useful knowledge,—apprentices, journeymen, servants, mechanics, shopmen, clerks, students, teachers,—the lad who has for years quitted a daily school, sitting by the side of his younger brother, still a schoolboy, sometimes the father by the side of his son,—the youth who aims at no higher attainments than those which this school can enable him to reach, beside him who is the daily attendant in a higher academy, or even in the university,—he whose



sole aim is to acquire knowledge, beside him whose chief object is its communication,—the raw lad who has just entered, swallowing with eager astonishment what falls from the lips of him, who but a few months before knew as little as himself. Here, as in the day-school, the youths are instructed in English Grammar and general acquaintance with their own language, the Elements of General Knowledge, Arithmetic, Writing, and Geography. From the time when the evening school was opened, the instructors anxiously, though only incidentally, threw into their other lessons as much religious information as the subjects naturally admitted of. At length, however, as has elsewhere been noticed, we had the gratification to receive from the lads themselves, a request that a portion of their time might exclusively be devoted to the highest and most inestimable of all knowledge : which request, they said, they were induced to make from an humbling sense of their own inferiority, in this respect, to the younger pupils who were in attendance upon our Sunday Evening School. This was gladly complied with, and, in consequence, besides devoting the whole two hours on every alternate Wednesday evening to religious instruction, the lads have regularly assembled ever since on Sunday mornings from nine o'clock to twenty minutes past ten for the same important purpose. If their ordinary meetings be pleasing, this is still more delightful. If a benevolent mind cannot but view with complacency a thirst in youth for any branch of knowledge useful in one's station, how much more a thirst for that knowledge which alone can make " wise unto salva-

tion." How particularly pleasing in an age of innovation, when all sorts of new opinions, particularly in religion, were afloat, to behold so many young men listening with eager attention to instructions quite destitute of novelty or any other popular attraction, of which the only recommendation was their simplicity, nay, which unsparingly rebuked all those dangerous tendencies so prevalent among youth of their class in the perilous times in which they lived.

That the instructions of every description given to these youths have been blessed with the most important benefits, the author cannot permit himself to doubt. That they have proved an admirable introduction to mechanics' institutes is certain, and has been evinced by the large proportion of those pupils who have carried off prizes in the School of Arts : and most desirable assuredly it is that into such institutions they should carry the principles, as well as the knowledge, which they acquired under our humbler roof. On this subject it gives us peculiar satisfaction to add, that all those who have been so honoured have been not less distinguished for their attention, steadiness, ability and zeal in the discharge of the duties of their respective callings ; which has been most satisfactorily established by very ample certificates from their masters produced to the Author at his request. It is by no means into schools of arts alone we are desirous of following our pupils. We have the still more grateful satisfaction to be assured that the knowledge and the habits acquired during their evening visits to us, continue to shed an humble but dignified lustre over their own evenings

at home. They have acquired, in very many instances at least, a taste for useful and improving reading, which has happily superseded the necessity of looking out for themselves foreign resources of a far less ennobling character. With this view the evening pupils of our school have established for their own benefit a LIBRARY. To the excellent manner in which they have selected their books, the Writer can bear ample testimony from the circumstance of his having been himself appointed patron to this institution, with the privilege of a *veto* with regard to the admission of any book which he may disapprove. The lists of proposed books, which for this purpose have been laid before him, do indeed infinite credit to those by whom they have been drawn up. That in the present times other and more exceptionable books and publications must also fall in their way there cannot be a doubt: and this, it should be remembered, is the natural consequence not of the particular education which they have received, but merely of their being taught to *read*. Here too we have good ground to flatter ourselves that the principles which under our roof they had imbibed, have, in so far as they were concerned, extracted no inconsiderable portion of the venom. At a time when the world was mad, and when the *younger* pupils of our own day-school lisped the prevailing pestilential slang, (the less wonderful when it is considered that inflammatory boards were actually held up in front of our own windows on the days of the processions) our elder pupils, on the other hand, in various addresses which they presented to the Author, thanking him for his past services in their

behalf, and praying their continuance, expressed in the strongest manner their contentment with their own conditions, their indignation at the spectacles which they beheld around them, and their earnest desire to be permitted to continue under his guidance “amid the perils and dangers by which they were beset on every side from the convulsed aspect of political and religious opinions.” When every trade had its own “political union,” to continue unconnected with which rendered any one a marked man, the evening pupils were at much pains to satisfy him that a far smaller proportion of those connected with our establishment had any connexion with these institutions than of any similar number of persons in the same condition of society. On a still more recent occasion, when, in commenting on the duties of men in their various relations of society, he expressed himself with the utmost freedom on the opposite sentiments and practices then unhappily prevalent, his observations were received with the most cheering approbation, followed by a request that the instructions should be printed for the benefit of themselves and others.\* If, as they allege, these instructions have really afforded to them any protection against the dangers by which they unhappily have been and may still continue to be surrounded, their Author will indeed have the satisfaction to think that he has not lived altogether in vain.

\* This is now published under the title of “Exposition of the Sins and Duties pertaining to Men in their various Relations of Superiors, Inferiors, and Equals, addressed to the Pupils of the Edinburgh Sessional Evening School.”

## CONCLUSION.

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Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of this realm by erecting a grammar school ; and whereas, before, our fathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity ; it will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee, that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear.

SHAKESPEARE.

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IN closing our Account of the Edinburgh Parochial Institutions, we are aware, it may be asked, what has been the result ? Have they fulfilled the important objects for which they were originally instituted ? Have profligacy and crime been diminished ? Are our gaols no longer crowded with delinquents, or, at least, with youthful delinquents ? Is the age in which we live, distinguished as it is both for general and religious education, alike distinguished for virtue, for order, and for social happiness ?—Would God we could answer these questions in the

affirmative. Alas ! Crime still abounds. The danger to the young is great as before. The spectacle around them is no less dismal. But it is amid this very gloom, we conceive, the benevolent founders of this establishment have most room for self-congratulation, when they reflect upon the multitudes, whom, they have the best founded reason to believe, their exertions have rescued from the general destruction. They set down, "in the wilderness" of life, "a lodge of wayfaring men" whither the benighted and unsheltered traveller might "escape from the "windy storm and tempest ;" and whence, when the immediate danger should in some degree abate, he might be sent forth better protected and prepared to meet the future perils of his journey. What though around this asylum the storm continued to howl as before, and thousands, whom no kind guide conducted to the place of refuge, perished beneath its relentless ravages ? What even though a few, after quitting the hospitable lodge, may have disdained the means of protection which they there received, and the directions which were there given them for their guidance in their future journey, and thus have fallen wretched victims to their own headstrong temerity ? Because it is manifestly impossible to control the raging elements,—because the lodge has, of course, been of no benefit to those who fled not to it for shelter,—because some who did enter it may perhaps have subsequently perished,—shall we forget the many hundreds whom it has preserved from destruction, and of whom we are in the daily practice of receiving the most gratifying and the most

grateful accounts? "Let us lament," as has been well observed on a similar occasion, "over symptoms of a disease in the body politic, which, if it goes on, must find, sooner or later, a fatal ending; but let us not undervalue the antidote, which has all along been checking this strong poison."\*

Of the changes, which their education and new habits have operated upon the characters of our pupils, while within the walls of the seminary, we have ourselves witnessed many very pleasing instances. Many who entered it, and that not at the very earliest stage of life, quite ignorant and regardless of religion, have there become deeply interested in its important truths, and to all appearance at least strongly impressed with a sense of the moral obligations which it imposes. Some who were originally addicted to lying, and to every species of meanness, and were on that account shunned by their companions, have, under the influence of the religious and moral discipline of this institution, and of that high tone of right feeling and sense of honour which it infuses, been altered into beings of apparently a quite different stamp. In nothing, however, has such an amendment been more conspicuous than with regard to temper. Often has it been our delight to behold sullenness and discontent converted into gratitude and satisfaction,—to see the gathering storm upon the brow dispelled by a single look, and giving way to a mingled smile of shame and of grateful recognition,—and even to hear

\* Lockhart's Life of Burns.

from the lips of the pupils themselves an acknowledgment, that their parents at home had remarked a striking change upon their temper, from the period of their entering our institution. That profane and disgusting language, too, which is elsewhere so common in this class of society, is here never heard without exciting in the minds of the pupils the strongest feelings of horror and aversion. It is indeed almost never heard at all, except from those who have been recently admitted : and if, on any occasion, it escapes from an older scholar, it is immediately regarded as a sure symptom of his having fallen into far worse company than that of his school-fellows. In one of the very few instances of this kind which have occurred for some years in this school, we received intimation of it from the monitors. We spoke to the boy on the subject, and inquired particularly about the company which he kept. He appeared however quite sullen and hardened, and would give us no answer. We then sent for his father, and, after telling him what had occurred, put to him the same question about his son's company. He at first said that he was not aware of his son being in any bad company ; but, after a single moment's recollection, he added, " I fear, Sir, " you are right : his mother and I have sometimes " been saying that he stays longer out at night now " than he used to do." We begged his father to keep a strict eye upon him, promised that we should do the like while he was in school, and told him at the same time that, if the boy's bad habits continued, he must be removed from the school, to pre-



vent his example from contaminating others. From that hour there was a marked improvement in his conduct, and he afterwards told us, that at the former period he was in the practice of being every night about the stables of a place of public entertainment; than which there can hardly be a worse haunt for young people. That for a time at least this institution was thus the means of rescuing the boy from extreme jeopardy, it is quite impossible for any one to doubt.

The *improvements* introduced into the system of education practised in this school have in no slight degree tended indirectly, as well as directly, to promote that *moral* reformation of which we are here speaking. Of the indirect methods to which we allude, the fondness, which the pupils have acquired for school, has in a particular manner operated most strongly and beneficially. When we first knew the school, the children there, as in most other seminaries, as soon as they could read tolerably well, were anxious to persuade their parents, that they had now gotten enough of "learning," and in consequence were permitted to spend a most perilous interval, between the school and the workshop, in idleness, and exposed to all the temptations of a great city. Now, however, since their education has been rendered more interesting, the boys are eager to remain till a master is found for them. On various occasions have we had conversations similar to the following with their parents: "Our John's a braw reader and writer and coonter, but he's no' for coming awa' frae the school." "What do

“you mean to do with him?” “Just let him do what he likes till he gangs to a trade.” “Are you going to send him *soon* to a trade?” “Eh na! he’s no’ near auld enough for that yet.” “Is he not then much better here than wandering about idle in bad company?” “That’s very true; I dare say he’s quite right himsel’; we’ll e’en let him bide.” The consequence is, that the boy generally remains till he enters upon his apprenticeship, without even a single day’s interval; and is thus preserved from one of the most perilous situations in which youth can possibly be placed.

There yet remains another class of questions, which we own we once thought it quite unnecessary to notice, and which therefore originally found no place in this work. “What INJURY have such institutions done? How many have they incapacitated for their stations in life? How many forgers? how many rebels? how many infidels have they produced?” Such questions are not yet exploded, and are entertained by two descriptions of men whom it were most injurious to confound. Our blessed Lord makes mention of some as existing in his day, who, “taking away the key of knowledge, entered not in themselves, and them that were entering hindered.” Such, too, through a long age of darkness was the line of policy pursued, with a view to the like similar end, even by the ministers of a religion, which bore the name of Him, who announced that he came “to preach his Gospel to the poor.” To such an age, however, or to men only of a similar

stamp, the objections in question have not been confined : if so, they would have been quite unworthy of notice. Even in an age of *reformation*, and long after the benefits of general education had been universally acknowledged in the northern part of our own island, timid but conscientious scruples still lingered in other quarters well worthy of respect, relative to the expediency of teaching the poor to *read*. At a still more recent period, (strange and incredible as it may now appear !) Dr. Bell himself, the great champion of the education of the poor in England, expressly announced that it was no part of his project to teach them “ to write and cipher ; ” which arts he classed with “ Utopian schemes for the diffusion of “ general knowledge, that would soon realize the fable “ of the belly and the other members of the body.” Not long after this, however, a mighty revolution upon this subject took place in the minds even of the most timid. Dr. Bell at length, highly to his honour, spurning any charge of inconsistency which might be brought against him, with the full approbation of the hierarchy and the rulers of the state, became the most active promoter in his own schools of what he once deemed mischievous ; and, so far from finding any evils result from this fundamental change in his system, boasted only of the benefits which it had conferred upon the world. As regards ourselves, we once received from men of every party, sect, and condition, expressions of their high satisfaction at the exertions which were made in our establishment, and of their strong opinion of the blessings which they were calculated to diffuse. At the opening accord-

ingly of our new school-house, the Author, without the slightest fear of contradiction, congratulated the Directors upon this being done at a time "when the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, vied with each other in bidding them God-speed."

Since that time, however, it can no longer be dissembled, another partial change of sentiment has taken place. In the apprehensions entertained in some quarters regarding the consequences of Mechanics' Institutes, our own more humble labours began to be involved. In the sneers thrown out regarding the "march of intellect," we were no longer permitted to escape. Some of those friends, who once bestowed upon our institution unqualified approbation, began now to mingle with their continued compliments to the good *intentions* of its conductors, many a chilling doubt with regard to its ultimate consequences. At length it was no longer permitted to remain with us a matter of uncertainty, that, in quarters on every account well entitled to the highest respect, our labours had not been viewed without strong apprehensions of their being fraught with serious danger to society. In these circumstances, it would have been most unpardonable to have treated them with indifference, and to have done otherwise than bestowed upon them the most anxious and dispassionate consideration, and comparison with the result of our own experience.

In the first place, it is alleged that we are making journeymen and apprentices wiser than their masters; that we are likely to render them conceited;

and are incapacitating them for their stations in life. With regard to the first part of this objection, it is very true that, in every improvement in education, the rising generation at the time of its introduction must necessarily be the first participators, and that for a time, accordingly, children will, to a certain extent, be wiser than their parents, apprentices than their masters. Such of course must have been the case, when the lower orders were first taught to *read*. But this state of things was not of long continuance, and even during its existence, what evils were the result? Let Scotland, which so nobly set the example in this matter, bear her testimony. When she first admitted her least favoured sons to the benefit of education, were they less virtuous, less orderly, less obedient to their masters, and less steady and useful workmen, than the more ignorant population of other parts of the same sovereign's dominions? Such is not the tale which her statesmen, in pleading the cause of her parish schools, were wont to tell.\*

With regard, too, to the vanity, which it is said to be the tendency of our instructions to excite, and the consequent incapacity for following the ordinary employments of life, there is, we conceive, on the part of the objectors, a great misapprehension. They seem always to imagine, that every individual child, who is so instructed, is the only one of his class that is to receive this education. Were this

\* Speech of Lord Advocate (now Lord President) Hope at introducing the Scottish Parish Schoolmaster's Bill.

the case, there might indeed be some room, on the part of such an individual, for conceit, for withdrawing from the society of those whom he no longer considers as his fellows, and refusing to bear his part in their occupations. But, when all of the same rank receive the like education, no such notions of course come into any of their heads, and the objection is at an end. A gentleman having, in presence of Dr. Johnson, “maintained that a general diffusion of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage, for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere,”—that scholar, though assuredly quite untinctured with ultra-liberalism, made the following just and well-known reply, “Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first; but we see, when reading and writing have become universal, the common people keep their stations; and so, where higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same.” Nor was this a mere casual remark of Johnson’s, rashly hazarded by him in the course of ordinary conversation. The same sentiments were, on another occasion, expressed by him in still more emphatic language, to a gentleman who consulted him upon the propriety of establishing a school upon his estate. “While learning to read and write,” he observed, “is a distinction, the few who have that distinction may be less inclined to work; but, when every body learns to read and write, it is no longer a distinction: a man who has a laced waist-

“coat is too fine a man to work ; but if every body had laced waistcoats, we should have people working in laced waistcoats.” But it is quite needless to theorize upon the subject. We are ourselves yearly sending out from the Sessional School multitudes of shoemakers and tailors, infected with its dangerous poison ! and are daily receiving the most gratifying assurances from their masters of the manner in which they conduct themselves. Their industry and skill in their various occupations seem to be in direct proportion to their success in school ; and those who have been fortunate enough to get our best scholars, have been known to inquire, whether we have any others of the like description to give them ? Our greatest proficientes are still content to “ dwell among their own people,” and to follow the occupations of their fathers. This indeed has sometimes been exhibited in a manner that has surprised us. In consequence of the anxiety to get the system of the Sessional School introduced into other parts of the country, our best scholars have frequently been requested to follow the profession of teaching. This request, though strongly urged, has on more than one occasion been declined by the boys themselves, who preferred entering into ordinary mechanical occupations. Still, however, their fondness for their original studies remained. Some of them requested permission from their friends to continue at our evening school, while others, who were patterns of diligence in the workshop, employed their vacant hours at home in useful reading. Such vacant hours come to all : but, alas !

are they so spent by all? and would it be wise, would it be benevolent, would it be Christian, to deny to our brethren the means which are now held out to them, of rescuing from turbulence, from profligacy and degradation, and devoting to more ennobling purposes, those precious, or (it may be) those accursed hours? "The most active or busy man," Bacon well observes, "that hath been or can be, hath no question many vacant hours of leisure, while he expecteth the tides and returns of business: and then the question is but how those spaces and times of leisure shall be filled and spent? whether in pleasures or in studies? as was well answered by Demosthenes to his adversary Æschines, that was a man given to pleasure, and told him that his orations did smell of the lamp: 'Indeed,' said Demosthenes, 'there is a great difference between the things that you and I do by lamp-light!!'"

Are there any who still maintain that the general education of the people is adverse to the cause of religion? Of such, if the question were, Whether the people were to be *educated* at all? we should ask, Whether they have so poor an opinion of the religion for which they profess such zeal, as to imagine that it can be maintained only in ignorant uncultivated minds, and that it is of a nature incapable of standing the test of examination? But it is too late to argue in this way. All are now agreed that the poor should be taught, and that they should be taught to *read*. They are thus undoubtedly placed within the reach of the infidel; and the great ques-



tion therefore now is, whether they shall be left in his grasp? whether the friends of religion shall, under such circumstances, remain inactive? or whether, on the other hand, by an early cultivation of the understandings of the rising generation, and imbuing their minds with sound principles and just opinions, they shall enable them to meet those dangers, to which in future life they must necessarily be exposed?

To those who maintain, that the manner in which we are bringing up the lower orders is calculated to *undermine the foundations of society*, we would return a similar answer. Nor can that answer be better given, than in the words of the great philosopher, whose opinion we have so recently quoted: “Again, for that other conceit, that learning should “undermine the reverence of laws and government, “it is assuredly a mere depravation and calumny “without all shadow of truth. For to say, that a “blind custom of obedience should be a surer obligation than duty *taught and understood*, it is “to affirm, that a blind man may tread surer by a “guide, than a seeing man can by the light. And “it is without all controversy, that learning doth “make the minds of men gentle, generous, manageable, and pliant to government; whereas ignorance makes them churlish, thwarting, and mutinous; and the evidence of time doth clear this “assertion, considering that the most barbarous, rude, “and unlearned times have been most subject to tumults, seditions, and changes.” Is it, we may add,

the ignorant or the educated man, who will more easily be rendered the dupe of the designing demagogue? he, who has been instructed in the parish schools of Scotland, or he who has dwelt in the thick darkness of an Irish cabin?

And what is it after all, which is deemed so peculiarly objectionable in the education furnished by the Edinburgh Sessional School? Is it that the poor are there taught to *read*? Here, if anywhere, the danger lies: and even the Author himself, with all his zeal for sound education, cannot deny, that whatever may be the advantages arising from the instruction of all ranks in reading, (advantages which he certainly would not willingly forego,) his eyes are not closed against the dangers, too obvious and too plainly evinced by experience, which arise from this art, especially when communicated to men of uncultivated minds. But no. This is not the objection. The objectors, on the contrary, now call upon us by all means to give the poor as much reading, writing, and arithmetic as we please. What then? Can it be right to teach them to read, but wrong to make them *understand* what they read? It would be quite idle for us to pause to point out the absurdity of so futile an objection. But, if our readers have gone along with us in some of the preceding observations, they will be inclined to think the objection something worse than absurd. They will at once perceive, that if *reading* is to be put within the reach of the humbler classes, it is absolutely essential, not only in order to give them the full benefit of that reading, but as a preservative against the dangers to which they

may be exposed from improper publications, that their minds should at the same time receive due cultivation, and be adequately fortified against the assaults of the unprincipled and designing. There are others who tell us, "we make no objection to your *explaining*, that is all quite right and necessary, but as for your *Geography*,—what have these poor creatures to do with geography?" In other words, "explain to them every thing else but places; tell them what you please about animals, and plants, and stones; but, as you prize their happiness, or the good of mankind, for any sake tell them nothing about countries, or cities, or rivers, their situation, or the circumstances for which they are remarkable." This is a distinction which we own we are quite unable to understand. There appears to us in truth to be no study more innocent than geography, and few more useful or better adapted to all classes of society. What possible injury can accrue to a child from knowing where Glasgow or London is, or even Paris or Petersburgh, or any of those places where his friends happen to be, or of which he has occasion to read or hear? When in reading about St. Paul's Travels, for example, the child comes to the word "Cyprus," and asks what Cyprus is, may we tell him that it is a word of six letters and two syllables, with the accent on the former syllable,—point out to him its orthography, anxiously warning him against substituting an *i* for a *y*,—and perhaps moreover inform him, that it is a noun of the neuter gender, singular number, and objective case; but when the child still presses us

to tell him what the word means, must we say to him, "My dear boy, we may teach you the proper sound, spelling, and grammar of this word, but with this you must be content; ask no more, for this is one of those things which it is deemed dangerous, and we are therefore not permitted to explain to you?" Some one perhaps will retort, that "he has no dislike to a child being told incidentally where a place is, that his objection only extends to every thing like regular teaching by a map, and that, in the present instance, he thinks it would be quite wrong not to tell the child that Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea." But what danger lurks behind a map? and is it not quite obvious that, to a pupil placed in such circumstances as our objector would have him, the Mediterranean Sea must be just as unintelligible as Cyprus previously was and still is? We have selected this example from the incidental circumstance of the passage in the Acts of the Apostles, to which we have referred, having been read by our pupils at the time when we were writing this chapter, though it must be quite obvious, that the inconvenience arising from the want of geography must be much more strongly felt on many other occasions.

In fine, we by no means anticipate, as the results of general education, either those miraculous benefits, or those frightful dangers, which its most sanguine supporters and strenuous opponents respectively predict. He who reflects, that "the wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure, and that he

“ that hath little business shall become wise,” will not readily expect from a mechanic the wisdom of a philosopher. He will not expect that “ he that holdeth the plough, and glorieth in the goad, and driveth oxen and is exercised in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks ; that giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder ;” or “ the carpenter or workmaster, that labours night and day ;” or “ the smith sitting by his anvil, and considering the iron work ;” or “ the potter sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet ;”—shall ever “ be sought for in public counsel, or sit high in the congregation.”\*

Neither are we sanguine enough to expect, that, by instilling right principles, we shall uniformly ensure right practice, or by communicating the most perfect knowledge of the important truths of religion, secure a steady performance of its sacred obligations. But, at the same time, speaking both theoretically and practically, we have no hesitation in declaring, that we know no human device better calculated to promote the welfare of our species,—to advance the cause of religion, of virtue, and of social order,—and to send forth the young into the world, prepared to meet its dangers and its trials, to encounter at once the sophistry of the infidel, the seductions of the profligate, and the intrigues of the factious, than that education, which is founded upon the eternal basis of Christianity, which renders the pupil acquainted

\* Ecclesiasticus, ch. xxxviii.